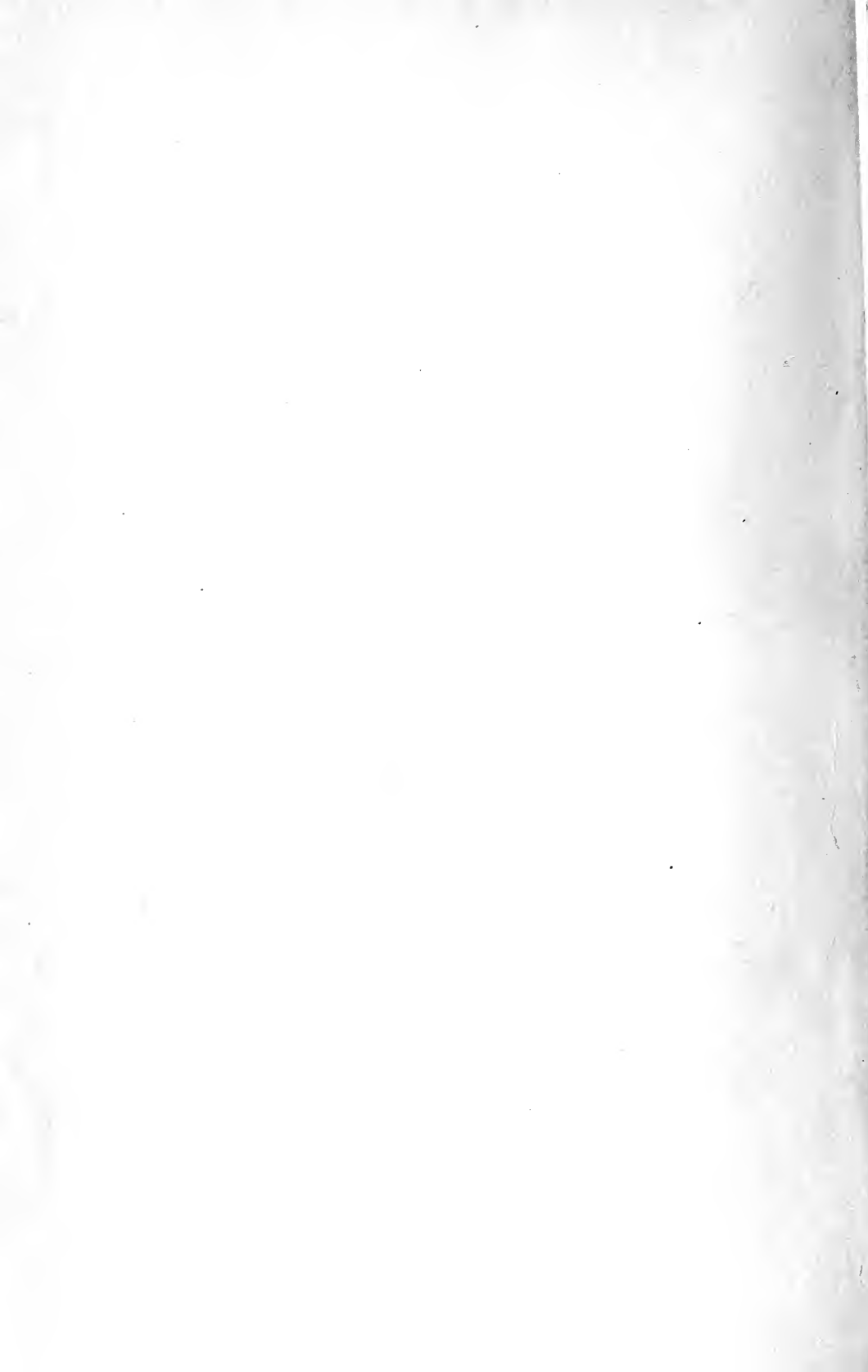
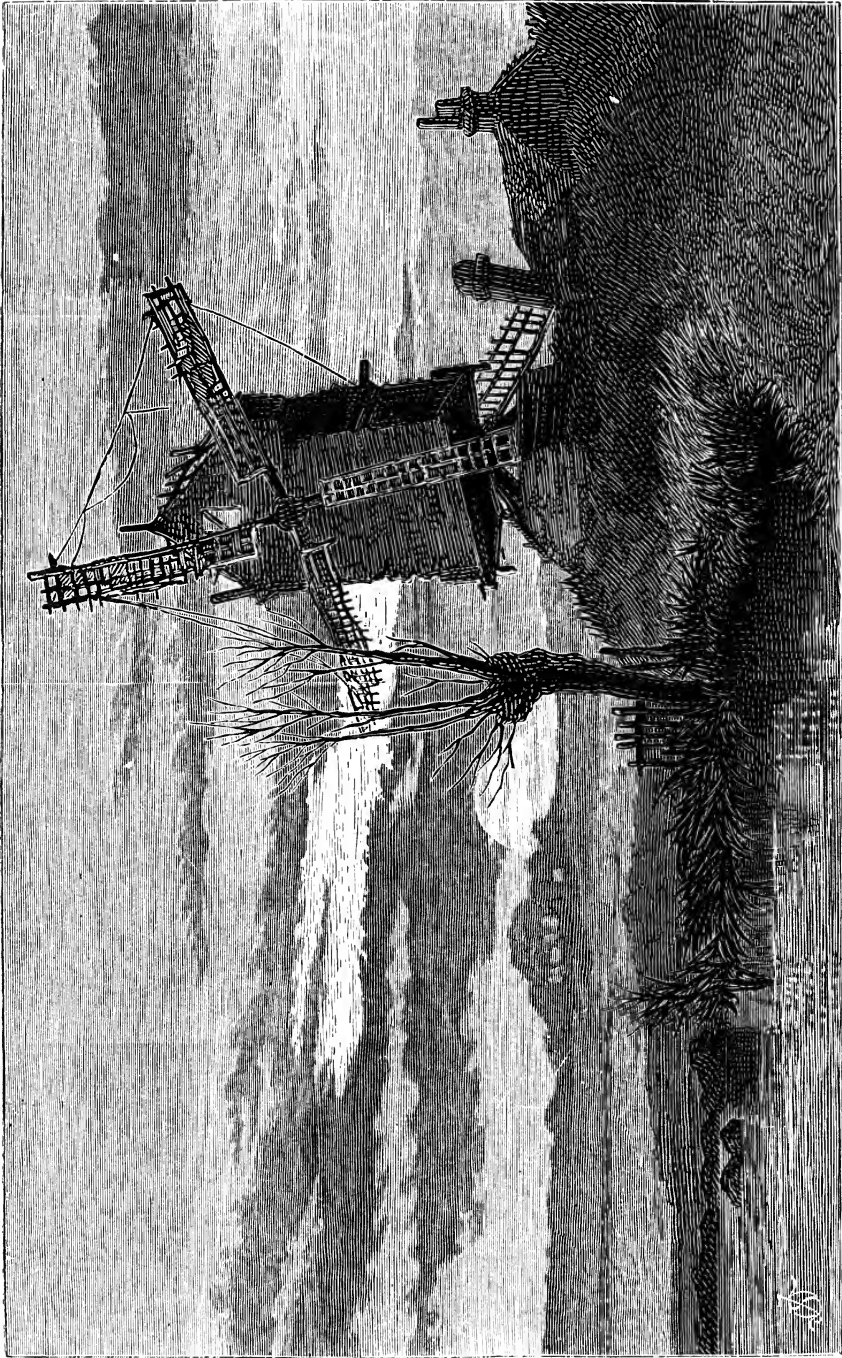


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Once a Week.]

FRONTISPIECE.

"We left the dreary spot, not wondering now
Why village youths and maidens shun the place."

The owl shrieked wildly in the rotting mill.
A weary wind went rumbling in the hills."—p. 512.

July, 1870.

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ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES

VOLUME V.

FEBRUARY TO AUGUST, 1870

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ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 110.

February 5, 1870.

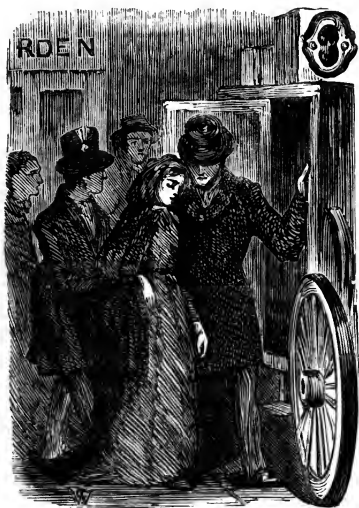
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THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

PROLOGUE.—PART I.



IN a December night in the year 18—, a number of people loitered near the landing-place at Dover, awaiting the arrival of the Calais packet, already some hours overdue.

The night was black as pitch; the wind blew a hurricane; the waves broke over the pier with ever increasing rapidity and force; and, white-crested, rolled foaming far up the beach, dashing their driving spray into the anxious faces of the watchers on the shore. Rain, sleet, and snow fell in alternate showers, mercilessly beating against the people who, sheltering themselves as best they could against the fury of the elements, stood peering into the darkness, in the direction whence the boat might be expected, and trying hard in the darkening storm to descry a light rising above the sea—the mast head light of the Calais boat.

Among the various little groups of people, anxious inquiries were whispered for the safety

of the boat. Each man asked his neighbour if it were possible the packet could cross safely in such a storm. Nor were the answers returned very re-assuring. Spectators of a melancholy turn of mind said positively, "it was all U.P."—"they had known storms before and they recollected nights—" but nobody could remember such a night as this; still there were in the assemblage some Job's comforters, who shook their heads and remarked sagely that "it *might* turn out a little better than *they* expected, yet." And so the rain and the hail pelted down and the darkness grew more dark.

The only cheerful ray of light to be seen streamed across the deluged roadway from the red-curtained tap-room window of the "Three Jolly Tars." As may be supposed, mine host of the "Jolly Tars," was doing an unusually large stroke of business; the tap-room was filled with very rough looking men. The company congregated round the fire-place in the parlour was rather more select; it consisted of some eight or nine individuals who, having thrown off their mufflers and great-coats, were engaged in the soothing occupation of swallowing great gulps of hot brandy and water.

Amos Brady stood with his back to the fire.

He was a man of about thirty years of age, and wore the dress of a superior sort of servant. He was rather a stout man; his features had an expression of low cunning, and altogether his aspect was anything but prepossessing. In his hand he held a tumbler of steaming spirit and water with which the barmaid of the "Jolly Tars" had just served him. He carefully crushed the lumps of sugar at the bottom with the little glass pestle, and then stirred the contents of his tumbler meditatively three or four times, finally disposing of his grog in two draughts.

"Have another 'six'?" said a man, with whom he had been conversing.

"Well—it is a night!" he said. "I think I will."

Two more glasses of liquor were brought.

"You ain't been down to take a look, have

you?" inquired the man, handing a glass to Brady.

"No, I have not," he answered.

"Come, then, drink up and let's go down," said his acquaintance.

"Not for me, thank you," said Brady. "It's raining cats, dogs, and pitchforks. Can't you hear it?"

"It won't hurt you for a minute or two."

"Not for me, thank you. I'm not going out into it, not for twenty packet boats with twenty Robert Mortimer, Esquires, and friend on board."

So Mr. Robert Mortimer's gentleman stayed in the comfortable shelter of the "Jolly Tars," and the other man went down to the pier alone.

The storm raged through the night—the wind blew—the rain poured down.

And so hour after hour rolled by till it was morning, and with the morning the storm abated.

Whilst it was yet dark, but when the first faint streak of grey had appeared in the horizon, all questions were answered and doubts and misgivings put an end to, by the appearance of a bright light immediately opposite the pier. The boat was safe.

Somewhat more people than usual were collected to witness the arrival of the packet; the motley assemblage of individuals whose business called them there—Post Office agents, newspaper couriers, customs' officers, porters and loungers—was swelled by the addition of a good many persons who, alarmed by the severity of the storm, were willing to brave the elements in their eagerness to learn the fate of the boat.

Important news was expected by this mail; imperfect accounts and flying rumours of another savage attack on the life of Louis Philippe had reached England by the last packet, and the mail-boat now in sight was expected to bring over full information of the attempted assassination of the king.

As she neared the shore, such of the spectators as had any voice left gave a feeble cheer. There was the boat safe and in port; but in such a gale it was no easy matter to bring her round to her moorings; her paddle-wheels revolved rapidly, but without producing any effect other than a mighty foam and splashing. Twice or thrice she was brought up to the pier, and drifted past, borne away by the force of wind and tide; at last in a temporary lull of the storm, an effort to make her fast was attended with success; she was safely moored to the pier.

In an instant all was bustle and commotion—people shouted and ran in all directions. Aroused by the noise, Amos Brady awoke from a nap he was taking before the fire in the parlour of the "Three Jolly Tars," which was situate hard by the beach, and coming down to the pier, took his station by the gangway carefully scrutinizing each passenger who left the boat.

He had stood shivering at his post for some time, until nearly everybody had landed, and the porters were busily carrying off the luggage, before he recognized the persons he sought; a lady and gentleman who were slowly ascending the gangway. They were both dressed in black; the lady wore very deep mourning as if for some near relative; she was tall and apparently young, but as she leaned heavily on the arm of her companion for support, she walked, not with the elastic tread of youth and health, but with the spiritless step of sickness and trouble.

The servant advanced to meet them, and, touching his hat to his master, relieved him of a cloak and shawl he was carrying on his arm.

"Have you a fly here, Brady?" said the gentleman. The servant replied in the affirmative; the lady was handed into the vehicle, the servant mounted the box, the porters piled the luggage on the top, and they were driven to their hotel.

It was noon on the last day of the year. The morning was cold and raw. Since the night the weather had changed; a keen east wind was blowing and sharp frost was setting in: the streets of Dover were fast becoming a sheet of ice. At the door of the hotel to which the travellers had been driven in the early morning stood a post-chaise and pair of horses in readiness for a journey. In a room on the first floor, eating his breakfast in the cheerful blaze of a bright fire, Robert Mortimer sat.

He had just finished his meal and was lighting a cigar, when his servant entered and announced that the carriage was in readiness for their departure.

"You said you had taken the rooms as I desired?" said his master.

"Yes, sir."

"Perfectly respectable, and quiet?"

"Perfectly so, sir. I know Mrs. Grafton, the person who lets them."

"Very well—that is enough," replied Mr. Mortimer. "Now procure the requisite assistance to get the lady into the carriage."

Those who looked on thought the pallid and

tottering woman too ill to travel ; but she was, with some assistance, placed in the chaise, and pillows and cushions arranged for her support. The door was shut, the post-boy cracked his whip, the horses slipped about on the treacherous pebbles, and she and her companion were on their way to London.

* * * * *

Nine o'clock at night : the last night of the year : Robert Mortimer was pacing up and down the library of his house in Grosvenor Square. Two wax lights at either end, and a reading-lamp on a secretary in the middle, imperfectly illuminating the great room, shed a feeble light on the thick Turkey carpet, leather covered chairs, and massive oak tables with which it was furnished ; little light was reflected by the gilded backs of the books ranged on the shelves round the walls, by the burnished frames of the costly pictures, or the great mirrors at either side : there was, indeed, but light enough to show the room was dark, to show that the heavy crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling was lightless, to show that the fire on the hearth was dull.

The sombre gloom of the apartment accorded well with the frame of mind of the occupant. Robert Mortimer paced restless and uneasy, to and fro, with his hands behind his back ; his age was about eight and twenty, but he looked somewhat older, his face was pale, his hair dark, and curling over his broad white forehead, already furrowed with deep lines of care ; his sharp penetrating grey eyes lighted regular and well defined features—the mouth and chin alone indicated any traces of weakness in his character. Robert Mortimer's was a face of power. He was called a handsome man ; his figure was tall, and his carriage erect. He was in his dinner dress. The cup of tea served after that meal stood untasted before him ; on the secretary there lay the evening paper unopened ; a number of letters, the correspondence accumulated during a fortnight's absence from England, requiring his attention, were lying with unbroken seals upon his desk ; but Robert Mortimer, Member of Parliament for Malton, was in no humour for such business on that December night. Nervous, thoughtful, scheming deep schemes, and dreaming of a turn of the wheel of fortune his most ambitious aspirations dared hardly fashion into hopes, with knitted brow and noiseless footstep, the dark pale man paced up and down the room. After a few turns he stopped, threw himself on a couch opposite the

lamp, and began to open his letters ; but his restless mind refused to give interest or attention to their contents, his uneasy limbs would not be rested on the couch. In moments of profoundly agitating reflection, nature demands not only solitude but motion. Again, with his hands behind his back, Robert Mortimer sought composure in walking backwards and forwards up and down the room.

Presently his attention was arrested by a book projecting a little from one of the rows of shelves. An instinct of order led him to push it into its place. In doing so his eye caught the title : it was the first volume of a novel he had written when almost a boy, soon after leaving Eton—the maiden and only effort of his fancy. Upon its appearance it had been highly praised by friendly critics, and certainly showed marks of talent, although the style was high flown, the sentiment false, the morality doubtful. Like all very boyish productions, the pictures of life it contained were the creations of imagination, not the results of experience and observation. He had been proud of it, and the sight of the book now recalled past sensations of pleasure and success, and his lips expanded into a smile. As the book lay in his hands the leaves opened, and there fell on the carpet at his feet an old, yellow, blotted letter, written in great round schoolboy characters. Mortimer stooped, picked it up, and took it to the light. The letter had been long forgotten in the excitement of political life ; but the writer was well remembered. It was from almost the only friend he had ever made ; it was filled with boyish expressions of admiration and regard, pleasant congratulations on the success of his book, and hopeful auguries of a brilliant future.

He read the letter. . . . The writer was long since dead. . . . It seemed like a voice from his boyhood. Memories of the past crowded upon his recollection. He read the letter through. "You are the cleverest man in England," it said. Robert Mortimer dropped the letter and musingly repeated the words.

"The cleverest man in England !" A smile of satisfaction lighted his face ; his hands closed with a smart clap as he exclaimed with animation—"The cleverest man in England ! Yes, to that indictment I may plead—guilty."

He picked up the yellow paper, crumpled it up in his hands, and threw it into the fire. Returning again to the table, his eye fell on the open page of the book. The place at which it lay open was where one of the heroic per-

sonages of his romance, perched on a rock, gave vent to his feelings in soliloquy before committing himself to a criminal act of omission—an act of omission by which his ambitious designs were furthered, and his desire of wealth and power gratified at the sacrifice of honesty and honour. Mortimer's attention was instantly rivetted upon the page; he read with greedy and devouring eagerness the time-serving speech of the puppet his own boyish fancy had created. The key-note of the sentiment was the expression of Othello:

He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
Let him not know 't, and he's not robb'd at all.

The monologue of which this was the gist, was expanded with much sophistry, and the principle of selfishness satisfactorily proved to be the sum and end of human things. "The end justifies the means," the ideal speaker was made to say. Did not the book prove the truth of the maxim? Mortimer read on to the end of the passage; as he read, his eyes sparkled with the brightness of a new energy, his pale features wore the flush of new resolve, his colourless lips were tightly pressed together, his breath came short and thick. . . . The Die was cast. Robert Mortimer had taken his resolve.

He rose from his seat, threw down the book, and strode now with quick, firm footsteps up and down the room.

"The bold gambler wins!" he exclaimed. "With the world success is all; the bold command success. What have I to fear?"

He paused before an exquisitely chiselled bust of the First Napoleon, the work of an Italian sculptor; the lineaments of the great genius of the Art of Conquest were rendered with perfect fidelity; that face of undaunted determination seemed to look a living look at Mortimer, and flash electric sparks of vigour into his craven soul. He had the mind, but not the courage to be a villain. At this moment the marble counterfeit of the typical Man of the World enchained his attention; he stood and gazed in silent admiration on the stern calm features before him.

"Fear—doubt—hesitation—what are these?" he whispered; then pressing his soft white hand on the cold surface of the stone, he asked—

"Would *you* have hesitated?"

There was a knock—he gave a guilty start. It seemed to him like the statue's answer.

With the power of a practised dissembler

he calmed his agitation, and feigning to be searching for a book, he received his visitors with complete self-possession.

Two gentlemen—one old, stout, and portly, the other of middle age and thin—entered the room with the bustle and importance of men who are the bearers of pleasing news.

"Let me congratulate you, Mr. Mortimer," said the younger of the two visitors. "It is a boy. I give you joy of your son and heir."

"Robert," said the old gentleman, clapping his son on the shoulder, "thank God, it is a boy!—what we all wanted. Just as I came in to see how your wife was, I met the doctor in the lobby bringing you the news, when he told me I was a grandfather. At last—thank God!" he continued, rubbing his hands together in great glee, whilst in his face pride and pleasure struggled for the mastery.

"How is—?" Mortimer began.

"Your wife?" replied the physician. "I think I may repeat our stereotyped professional phrase and say that mother and child are doing well."

"That is well," replied Mortimer.

"Upon my word, one of the finest babies I ever saw," said the physician.

"Ha! ha! On my honour now," laughed old Sir Harold Mortimer, the grandfather, "is it now. But I'll be bound you always say that of every one. Ha! ha!"

The physician gave a smiling assent to the old gentleman's pleasantry.

"I dare say they said the same of me, when I was that age," he continued.

"You are a fine man, Sir Harold, and we can, without much show of credulity, believe that you were a fine baby. However, ask Mr. Cross when you see him—he is with Mrs. Mortimer now—but ask him when you see him to corroborate what I say about your little grandson."

"No, no, I will take your word for it, Dr. Webbe," said Sir Harold.

Robert Mortimer received the congratulations of his father and the physician, and repaid them both with thanks; presently he sat down by his papers. This signal for their departure neither was sorry to take. Between the father and son there was no sympathy; nobody could like Robert Mortimer. As the petals of the flowers close in the cold air of night, so men's genial sympathies shut themselves against the influence of the Member for Malton.

"I shall be off down to the club and tell them there," said old Sir Harold, jumping suddenly out of his chair as if something

pricked him. "I shall see you in the morning."

"I must leave, too," said Dr. Webbe. "I know you political men have a deal of business always on hand, and your absence from home must have caused some arrears. I will look in to tell you all is right before I go. Good evening for the present."

"Good-night," said Robert Mortimer. "Thank you both." His visitors left him; and he was again alone.

The frown was gone from his brow, his face wore an expression of pleasure. "A father's feelings plead with me now!" he exclaimed, with arch hypocrisy, for the greatest of all hypocrites is the man who tries to deceive himself. This Robert Mortimer did, as he sat for some time in silent thought. His musings were interrupted by another knock; this time the servant Brady entered.

"Come in," said Mortimer, "how is——"

"My lady is——"

"*Not my lady,*" said his master, quickly; "*how is the woman in Wilderness Row?*"

Thus he spoke of his fellow-traveller of the day before.

* * * * *

PART II.

IT was about twelve of the clock on this last night of the year, and the bells of all the London churches were ringing the old year out, in anticipation of ringing the new year in. Little bells and big bells, quick and slow, melodious and discordant, far and near, were swinging and sounding, clashing and pealing, with a vigour in harmony with the critical period in the life of the year that was going and the year that was coming.

A few moments before the hour their clamour ceased, and there was silence in the great city—silence in the snow-covered streets and silence in the frosty air.

Then the great clock of St. John's, Clerkenwell, slowly boomed forth the midnight hour, and the new year had begun. The last stroke had no sooner sounded through the frosty air than the bells of all the churches burst forth again, clanging away at a merry rate, and the air was filled with their noisy welcomes to the new-born year.

The ringers in the belfry of St. John's pulled the ropes of the seven sound bells with right hearty tugs; and the sexton, who was an impulsive man, carried away by the feelings incident to the occasion, could with difficulty be

restrained from starting the eighth, the little cracked treble that had been in that unsound condition ever since the oldest inhabitant of the parish could remember, so eager was he to do fitting honour to the time. And on the opposite side of the street the bell in the turret of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri was swinging swiftly to and fro, calling the worshippers to mass: these were the bells you could hear in Wilderness Row.

Time has changed the Row; but five-and-twenty years ago, in a neat little red brick house, which always looked cleaner and brighter than the dingy tenements about it, there lived one Mrs. Grafton, the relict of a deceased fiddler at the theatres, for whom late hours, together with exposure to all weathers in his walks to and from the theatre, and a sadly too frequent fuddling at taverns, had aggravated a constitutional tendency to asthma, and Job Grafton had played his last tune about a year before this new year's eve for which the bells were ringing. Letting lodgings had in her husband's lifetime helped to swell their weekly income, and after his death Mrs. Grafton gained bread for herself and her little niece (for she had no child) by continuing to take lodgers into her house. Very often they were theatrical people—second-rate players, scene painters, or other hangers-on of a large theatre, who had been acquaintances and bottle companions of the fiddler deceased; occasionally city clerks and others, glad to get a clean room near their places of business. Rarely were they persons of any other class. But it was one of the exceptional periods in the history of No. 37, Wilderness Row, and Mrs. Grafton's only lodger was the lady who had been Robert Mortimer's fellow-traveller from Paris to London, and for whose use Brady, his servant, had taken Mrs. Grafton's lodgings a day or two before. The lodgings consisted of a little first floor drawing room and a bed room connected by means of folding doors.

At the time of which we write the only occupant of the front room was a tall, grim, unpleasant female, dressed in a black stuff gown, which emitted a very mouldy smell, and was decorated in front by a white apron with a frill round the bottom, and at the back by the strings properly belonging to the same; on her head she wore a cap, which, from the extreme simplicity of its construction, seemed adapted to the requirements of either day or night. Her action was slow and methodical as she stood gently stirring the contents of a little tin saucepan over the fire, or with noise-less footsteps moved about

the room adjusting such matters as required her care.

She was the nurse who had charge of Mrs. Grafton's lodger; and if no information concerning the lady's ailment could be gained from the contents of the tin saucepan, which indeed were neither more nor less than the mixture called gruel, which tradition and nurses have from time immemorial inflicted upon the feeble resolutions and weak stomachs of sick people, still it required no magician-like skill to unravel the meaning of the Lilliputian shirts and flannels airing on the clothes-horse before the fire, or of the tiny caps, with delicate lace borders spread out in a wicker tray or basket in the fender.

The fact was, Mrs. Grafton's lodger was in a critical situation.

The tall grim nurse in the mouldy dress continued to stir the contents of the saucepan, and to turn the diminutive garments airing before the fire, until she was hastily summoned by the landlady, over whose honest face coming events cast a decided shadow, and to the urgency of the crisis may be attributed the fact that Mrs. Grafton only found time to whisper a few hurried words, with great volubility and an entire neglect of the ordinary rules of punctuation, before the folding doors closed behind them, and the two women disappeared into the adjoining chamber.

And the bells of St. John's, Clerkenwell, rang out their noisy peals, regardless alike of births and deaths, of sickness and of health, on that new year's day; and their voices to some were voices of joy, and to others were heralds of death; and their sound as they pealed and clammed, and clammed and pealed, filled the sick lady's chamber in Wilderness Row.

It was within the first hour of the new year that the grim nurse emerged again from the folding doors, carrying in her arms, with great show of tenderness and care, a little wrinkled bundle of pink flesh, swathed in fine soft white flannel, and laid it in the cradle by the fire-side. As the little bundle lay there, seemingly asleep, its tiny pink hand lying outside the coverlet and screwed up into a very small fist, there was nothing heroic about it, and to all appearance a passing breath might have blown out the flame of life from the little lamp and extinguished its light for ever; but the tiny fist was an honest fist, and in time struck manly blows, and the little bundle of pink, sleeping there in its first bed, by the fireside in

Wilderness Row, grew up to be one of the heroes of this story.

"A healthy child, enough," said the English surgeon, Mr. Jones, to the French surgeon, Dr. Gasc, as he stooped over the cradle and peered kindly into the little face on the pillow.

"Monsieur, it is," replied the other, "I wish I could say so well of the mother."

Mr. Jones nodded assent, took a pinch from his snuff box, looked attentively first in the direction of the folding doors, and then at his gold stop-watch.

"I must go," he said, addressing Dr. Gasc. "I wish I could stay, but I really am compelled to leave now." After a moment's pause, nodding in the direction of the chamber, he added, "her position is critical."

"I shall remain until it is a change for the better or——" and Dr. Gasc's sentence was finished by a slight shrug of the shoulders, which his brother surgeon seemed perfectly to understand.

A few moments after Mr. Jones left the sound of wheels was heard in the street. A vehicle stopped opposite the house, its occupant, a gentleman with a loose wrapper thrown over his evening dress, alighted, gave two slight raps, and the door was opened to Robert Mortimer.

The little Mrs. Grafton had to tell of her lodger was soon told. From the time when she had been lifted out of the carriage and taken upstairs in a state of unconsciousness on the previous morning, till then, she had only once made any inquiry: it was for Dr. Gasc.

On hearing this, Mortimer gave a nervous start, and turned a shade paler than was natural to him.

"Had she asked for nothing more?—said nothing more?" he demanded.

Mrs. Grafton replied that, knowing Dr. Gasc well, she had ventured to send for him; but that when he arrived the patient was insensible, and had continued so, adding that the French surgeon did not recognise the lady.

Robert Mortimer gave a sigh of relief.

For a few minutes he was closeted with Dr. Gasc; and directly this interview was over he left the house.

"Cursed cold night!" he muttered, as he told the hackney coachman to put him down near Grosvenor Square.

So the French surgeon—who was of great repute in and about Bartholomew Square, where he lived—and the landlady and the grim nurse sat up and watched by the bedside

of the sick woman, until daylight began to dawn.

Then the three watchers thought there was a change. Her lips moved, unintelligent sounds escaped them, life seemed to be returning—life without reason. Presently her voice was louder, her utterance more distinct. Her mind wandered, not in the ravings of madness over troublous events and painful times, but rather seemed to roam over the scenes of her infancy, in country places and green fields.

Her speech was not coherent, many of her words were unintelligible to those about her bed, but ever and anon her voice rose and became painfully distinct. She called "Father!" now; now, at her mother's knee, a little child again, she said, in a low sweet voice, which one at least of those three watchers never forgot, scraps of hymns her baby voice had doubtless often sung in peace, and far, far away. And she was very young now, and very fair, with long flaxen hair and delicately chiselled features, and a form of perfect symmetry.

Softer and softer her voice became, and she spoke at longer and longer intervals, till, in the early dawn of the New Year's-day, she lay calm and composed, and her blue eyes were closed in sleep.

Seeing this, the nurse left the room: the surgeon and the landlady watched by the pillow of the sufferer still.

She slept about an hour. When her eyes unclosed, she seemed to have recovered her senses, for she looked wistfully about her. Her wishes were understood—they placed her baby by her side: she gave it one gentle caress, one long loving look from her large tearful blue eyes, then murmuring in a low, sweet voice—

"Through life's long day, through death's dark night,
Oh! gentle Jesus, be our light"—

she sank upon her pillow into a soft slumber.

When the grim nurse returned, her Spirit had departed from Earth.

* * * * *

The same pale cold daylight of the New Year's morn that penetrated into the chamber of death, in Wilderness Row, streamed in through the casements of Robert Mortimer's chamber, in Grosvenor Square.

The dawn of New Year's-day is a holy time,

and should give birth to holy thoughts; not such were his. He had spent the night in unrighteous vigil—the unrumpled bedclothes plainly told that he had not sought his couch; wrapped in a dressing-gown, and seated before the fire in an easy-chair, his hands held a book before him, but his thoughts were not on the volume;—he sat like Richelieu awaiting François' packet.

Pale, anxious, agitated, his careworn face displayed the perturbed working of his mind; every nerve was racked, every sensibility stretched to the furthest compass; no need now to maintain the appearance of composure—nobody could see him: he sat listening to every sound, as the wild animal caught in a snare listens to the approaching footsteps of the trapper. With aching head, parched lips, moist brow, and trembling damp hands, he sat and listened.

At the sound of wheels in the street he rose with a start, drew back his curtains, and stared out.

The busy world was waking to life and action. He put out his lights and continued to stand at the window. It was such a morning as New Year's morning should be, bright, clear, and frosty; but its brightness brought no cheer to him. The milkman was leaving his milk at a neighbouring house, and saluting a rosy-cheeked kitchenmaid on the area-steps with a hearty "Wish you a happy new year, my lass." Robert Mortimer closed his window with a growl. It was chilly, and he sat down again before his fire. At length the church clocks struck nine. A quick light footstep was heard on the stair. Mortimer opened the door, and admitted Brady.

"Well, what news?"

"Dead, sir."

Robert Mortimer clasped his brow with his hands and seated himself on his bed.

"Died at eight this morning, sir," Brady continued, after a brief silence.

"Her brat?" said Mortimer, looking up and darting an eager glance at Brady.

"Doing well enough, I believe, sir," replied his imperturbable servant.

There was another brief interval of silence. Then Mortimer started up from his seat and began to unfasten the girdle of his dressing-gown.

Brady advanced to the door of the chamber.

"Say nothing of all this, Brady," said his master, slowly and emphatically. "You know something of my reasons; more of my purposes than I have told you. There is nothing lost by being trustworthy in my service; of that

you are well aware, *and I know you can keep a secret.*"

"I can do that, sir," replied the man, steadily contemplating the flowers on the carpet. "Anything wanted, sir?" he added, opening the door.

"No. Call me at twelve. I have been busy all night with my papers, and I feel tired."

As Brady descended the stairs, Robert Mortimer hugged the bedclothes about him and composed himself for sleep.

No pious echo of the God-sent message "peace on earth, goodwill to men," no seasonable thought, no sentiment of charity, no feeling of forgiveness, in keeping with the beginning of a new year, found place in Robert Mortimer's breast. As he lay down in his bed he exclaimed, under his breath,

"MASTER OF THE SITUATION!"

* * * * *

Four days after the day of her death, on a bitterly cold, snowy, fifth of January, Mrs. Grafton's lodger was laid in her last resting-place.

In the mortuary chapel at the Cemetery the surpliced clergyman hurriedly said the simple Service for the Dead over several other coffins at the same time that he said it over the black cloth-covered box that now held what once had been

MARIE ERLE.

The service was soon over, the coffin was lowered into the ground, the gravelly earth fell on the lid with a startling rattle, "ashes to ashes, dust to dust," and the mourners went back again along the snowy roads and lanes of Chelsea and Brompton till they plunged into the busy streets once more, and came at last to Wilderness Row.

THE TEMPTATION OF ARTHUR.

WHERE to the sea the woodlands fair dropped down,

So close, that ever when the moon was full
Sea-fairies came and joined the wood-nymphs' dance,

The king walked musing through the summer morn;

For in the night strange dreams had vexed his sleep;

And sad pathetic voices haunted him;
And dim forms beckoned him to glorious deeds;

So that he started up with haggard eyes,
And would have no man's comfort.

Far and near,

The blossom-laden boughs were all astrid,
And with delicious murmur filled the land;
Like playful children prattling on the beach,
The waves came up and hung around his feet;
Above, the sea-birds cried and flapped their wings;
Behind, the herons piped across the plain;
Through the dim wood a lark sang clear and shrill.

The wind-fanned woodlands and the peaceful sea
Were the familiar objects of his eye,
Herein naught beautiful or strange he saw;
But when the lark sang clearly through the woods,
And a deep stillness crept o'er sea and land,
He paused and listened to the bird's sweet notes.

Then said the king, "No common bird is this,
But some rare spirit poisoning like a lark,
And calling me to do some glorious deed
Which shall ennoble all my Table Round,
Making me worthiest of worthy knights."

Now, far and near, the lark sang clear and shrill.
"O sad, but happy spirit!" said the king,
"No tones of earth in those sweet notes find place;
Thou art of finer mould than our poor forms,
Which move but with the birth of new desires,
And are of constant elements devoid;
Thou dwellest somewhere in this happy place,
And I will search for thee, and find thy home.

"Now the great boughs bend as I pass along;
With silver heads upreared, snakes hiss at me;
Now through the deepening gloom glow many eyes,
And voices murmur like the midnight sea."

Soon, far away, he spied a little grove,
Through whose twined branches streamed the morning sun

Upon the soft green grass that waved beneath;
And hastening on, and quickly reaching here,
Behold, there sat upon a fallen tree
A maiden weeping.

In her saddened face

The lily and the rose each other vied;
Her eyes were violets hung with dewy tears;
Caressed by careless winds, her yellow hair
Lay like a web of gold above the grass;
Along her naked feet and soft white hands
The tangled brambles cruelly had trailed;
A samite mantle from her shoulders hung,
And hid the sleeky roundness of her arms;
At two spears' length there stood a milk-white steed,
Who neighed and watched the maid with blood-shot eyes.

The king drew near, and took her by the hand,
Whereat she shrank afraid, and would have fled,

But, looking up, and seeing a goodly knight,
She blushed, and bent her head, and plucked a
flower;

Then, gathering strength, she spoke to him, and
said:

"O art thou one of those who yester-eve
Slew my dear father and my brethren seven,
And wasted all our lands with fire and sword?"

To which the king: "Alas! most desolate maid!
Whose beauty seems as peerless as the skies;
Whose sorrows are as early flowers which droop
When frost-charms glitter in their chilly eyes;
Were these the chances strange which drove thee
here
All unattended, save by this sad steed?"

Then, looking up to him, she said: "Fair knight!
Thy voice is soft, and low, and free from guile;
Thy eyes seem full of pity to behold
How I have fallen from my good estate;
For hither fled I through the weary night,
My purpose to escape these savage men,
And come to Guinevere at Camelot;
For then, indeed, some noble knight, intent
On deeds of valour, might adventure forth,
And re-instate me and my sisters dear,
Who now are held in bondage by our foes."

To which, with eager gladness, said the king:
"Gather thy garments round thee: dry thy tears:
Mount thy good steed, and lead me to the place.
For never yet adventure have I had
So full of wonder, and of promise too;
My heart feels younger, fresh blood through my
brains
Rolls madly like a river in the spring;
Now through my mind there ever come and go
Dim visions which the magic mirror threw
When Merlin showed me all my life to be
Stretched out before us like a landscape fair;
Then felt I as I now feel—never man
Was moved so much, if the intent were small."

Now high in heaven the lark sang clear and shrill,
While these twain wandered in the trackless woods;
And ever as they went upon their way,
In soft sweet syllables she told him all,
While on her face he looked, and she on his.
And like the moon, which comes while yet 'tis day,
Hanging upon the edge of some dark cloud
Which serves to throw its saddened beauty forth;
So she did place her hands upon her face,
Hiding her eyes, whose brightness shone the more
The more she strove their brightness to conceal.

"What eyes are these," he asked, "which shine so
bright?"

These are not eyes, but surely two bright stars
Which glimmer through the mists of coming eve."

"Fair knight," she said, "you blame, but flatter
me;

These are but eyes: you do not blame the stars
Because the spirits of the moonlit sea
Do sing to them: the stars are not to blame.
So blame not me; and if my eyes seem bright
To your vain fancy, say it is the gloom
Which makes them seem so, or the happy fate
Which led me to you; and, my heart being full,
My thanks must needs be spoken by my eyes."

To which the king: "Thine eyes more glorious
grow,
And fill me with strange wonder and strange
doubts."

Then she, in anxious haste: "Far off I see
A glimmer in the east, it is the moon;
And, see, the trees are fewer, and beyond
The open country; further on the wood,
Where was my father's castle: let us on."

Then through the daisied meadows, where the
flowers,

Whispering "Beware!" looked shyly at the king;
Along the banks of many languid pools,
From which came slimy things to gloat at them;
By gloomy groves, whence came the mocking
sound

Of "Cuckoo! Cuckoo!" all the livelong day;
And round the wave-washed melancholy coast,
O'er which the gathering clouds kept awful watch,
While sea-gulls wheeled and shrieked around the
cliffs;

And by the plains where many herons piped,
He went with her; until, at length, they came
Unto the borders of a dismal wood.
She took his hand, and led him to a path
Which ran between two rows of savage pines;
And down this path she went, and he with her.

Cooing of ringdoves calling to their mates
Betokened that the day was waning fast.
Soon the drear forest and the evening shades
Enfolded them; and night came on apace.
Then dark clouds hemmed the sad and passionate
moon,

And not one single ray of gentle light
Lingered amid that weird and awful place.
Ere long they came to where a mountain gorge
Lay coiled beneath a dreadful precipice,
All thick with firs and many a mountain yew,
High in the sky; and as the tempest rose
The branches bent and broke, and thickly fell
Around them; and huge rocks forsook the cliffs
And crashed and thundered down the dismal
gorge;

And from afar a noise of waters came
Like the dull rolling moan of many seas;
And leaping cataracts foamed and hissed along,
And tumbled to the plains somewhere below.

Close to his face he felt her tangled hair
 In snake-like folds twining around his neck,
 While wan as wintry dawn did seem his face.
 Then, when a hollow gust swept down the gorge,
 Moaning and mocking like a thing of sin,
 In melancholy mood she crept to him,
 And hid her cold face close to his, and looked
 Into his wildered eyes, and clung to him
 And "Arthur!" cried, and all the mountain sides
 Echoed "Arthur!" Then when calmer grown,
 Because the storm was passed and it was light,
 She murmured "Not far off my land doth lie—
 Soft lawns, cool streams, and woodlands wondrous.
 Come, prithee, sweet, and let us leave this place."
 So ever on they went, until they came
 To a rare valley nestled 'mid the hills
 Like a sweet thought within a lover's heart;
 Wherein there was a little wood all filled
 With choicest scents and most delicious sounds,
 Which the sad clouds withdrew far off to hear;
 While full of love the tender moon came forth.
 "All this is mine, and may be thine," said she.

To which the king, a melancholy man:
 "Is this thy father's castle? Where are they,
 Thy brethren seven and thy sad sisters three?
 For whose dear sakes, and thine, and to add fame
 Unto my name and to the Table Round,
 Hither came I, led by thy guileful tongue.
 This is no earthly place: these sights and sounds
 Are most unholy; prithee, lead me forth
 And leave me to myself, and let me go
 To my brave knights and to my Guinevere!"

And even as he spoke this well-loved name
 His mind ran back unto the happy day
 When all the land was filled with holy joy
 Because he called his Guinevere "Dear wife!"
 But when he cast his eyes upon the ground
 And they met hers which passionately uplooked,
 A sickly sadness came and stayed with him.

Which seeing, she with anxious tone outspoke:
 "Now, good sir knight, I trow thou art not pleased,
 And wherefore? For these woods have sights to
 please,
 And all of them are mine; say what thou wilt.
 Should'st thou be merry?—then in truth no lack
 Of food for merriment shall here be found.
 And why not merry? I am never sad,
 Who most have cause to be; for now, alas!
 I see thou lov'st me not."

To which the king:
 "Woman with flame-like hair and lustful eyes,
 Thy pretty syllables and dainty smiles,
 Nought heed I; for I know now who thou art.
 Not many moons have spent their mellow strength
 Since by such arts as thine was Merlin trapped;
 But, know thou that I am not one of those
 Whose passions are their masters, not their serfs;
 Soft arms and speechful eyes and rosy lips
 I hold as nothing; therefore let me go!"

To which the guileful damsel, creeping close,
 And twining both her arms about his neck,
 And hiding his still face amid her hair,
 And pressing her hot lips upon his lips,
 With many a tearful start, replied, and said:
 "Some there are who are sad, and, yet, therein
 Find greater pleasure than in all their joys.
 So be it, sweet, with you when you are sad.
 And wherefore sad? Answer, ye moonlit woods!
 O sweet! for thou art sweeter than the dawn,
 Sweeter than violets by south winds kissed,
 Sweeter than coo of doves when love is young,
 Or than the moon when she is in her prime.
 I love thee! For it fell upon a day
 That coming up to Camelot at the jousts
 (When deeds of daring thick as daisies were)
 I saw thee with thy true and goodly knights,
 And then I swore that I would make thee mine
 Ere the young moon had burnt herself away."

While this she said, behold the mellow moon
 Grew wan and wanner; and the happy stars
 Slid from the sky like smiles from some fair face;
 All unattended came the simple dawn;
 The forest was astir with many sounds—
 Birds, brooks, and fairy footfalls everywhere,
 And gleeful laughter only half suppressed;
 Then high in heaven a lark sang sadly shrill,
 Like a lost spirit in a world of woe.

Then he: "If good things in this place there be,
 Or in the heavens above, or earth below,
 Who have of knighthood charge, I pray their aid."
 Thereat she smiled a weird and hollow smile,
 And put her lips close to his clammy brow,
 And strove to comfort him with honeyed words.

To which the king: "Thy tender voice I hear
 Sounding like whispers from the underworld;
 Thy eyes of flame my weary senses pierce;
 Thy snake-like tresses coil around my neck;
 Upon my parched lips hot kisses fall;
 And soft arms fold me in a fond embrace:—
 But not thy gleeful words, thy eyes of flame,
 Nor tangled hair which coils around my neck,
 Nor kisses hot, nor arms which fondly twine,
 Can make me break mine all-accustomed vows;
 For I am cold as stone, and cannot melt
 Before the white heat of a woman's love.

* * * * *

And thou wilt give me all these wondrous woods,
 And make me lord of many tables round!
 O wily snakes, that show your speckled sides,
 Ye are not wily as a woman's tongue!
 Take off thy lips, they seem as hot as flame,
 And when they fall upon my haggard face
 Do hiss like sparks that fall into a pool.

* * * * *

Come forth, O sun! and cheer me, or I faint.

Afar thou shinest in the happy south,
But shunnest this sad place. O, Guinevere!
Mine own dear wife! where art thou? Tristram,
too,

The truest knight of all my Table Round;
And thou, most gentle Lady of the Lake,
Who gavest me my sword, and bid me forth
To consecrate the right and cleave the wrong,
Where, too, art thou, when most thy aid I need?"

Now high in heaven a lark sang very clear.
"Hush! what! that sound? Do'st hear it? 'Tis
the lark

Which called me forth to this adventure sad,
And now, perchance, doth come to lead me back,
Sent by the gentle Lady of the Lake."

And now the birds stopped half-way in their song,
The weird sad voices died amid the woods,
And sudden silence dropped around the place.
A little breeze up-sprang, and tossed her hair
In savage splendour round about her face;
Her lips were cold and bloodless; with both hands
She thrust him from her, while with stony eyes
She gazed at him; then, hissing through closed
teeth,

"Fool!" turned away and fled among the woods.

Then high in heaven sang the happy lark,
And dropped and dropped, until it rested safe
Within the spreading branches of an oak.
And, as with eager haste he raised his hands
To catch the bird, he heard a rustling sound,
And, turning round, with wondering eyes he saw
Sir Tristram and the Lady of the Lake.

She took his hand, and led him forth to where
The silly sea toyed with the tangled weed;
And in this quiet creek a vessel lay.
Embarking here with Tristram, from afar
Up-sprang fair winds; so that in one day's space
He found his wistful knights at Camelot.
And all these wondered where the king had been,
And marvelled how much older he had grown;
But none knew, save those twain who led him forth,
Sir Tristram and the Lady of the Lake.

AN UNDERGRADUATE'S STORY.

CHAPTER VI.

CECIL'S astonishment, nay consternation, may be imagined, when, on one of his almost daily visits to the solicitor's chambers, he was taken aside by the senior of the firm, and informed, with all the alacrity of a presumed herald of good tidings, that he himself, and no other, was actual heir at law to the last proprietor of the Hollies; and what was more, recognized as such, in the draft of a will, which had been made in his favour, and afterwards destroyed.

"Not a word of this, Mr. —, as you value my peace of mind!" was Cecil's eager exclamation; "least of all to your client. If, indeed, the law gives me undisputed possession of the Hollies, *she* need never know to whom she is indebted for reinstatement in its possession, or on what terms the law has reinstated her. Thank God for that! She never reads law cases in the newspapers, poor soul! she has had enough of them elsewhere; and were she even to see a decision in favour of *some* of the many Cunliffes who have swarmed like bees about this little bit of property, she need never know to which of them it was awarded, so as her own humble home has been insured to her. Just apprise her formally that such has been the result, and save her, above all things, the humiliation of feeling obliged to any one. You may even give her to understand, if necessary, that Sir Jasper, who really stood to the old man in much the same relation as myself, had been proved heir at law, to tranquilize her mind as to her undoubted right to stay where she is."

But though Mabel was fairly settled in unquestioning security in her beloved retreat, not even the glossy exuberance of evergreen foliage, or bright profusion of coral berries, from which its name was derived—nay, not even the joyous, though at times impulsive, spirits of her darling boy, could ward off painful reminiscences of happier days on the same cherished spot, or prevent the winter solitude of her home from pressing on the lonely widow.

Her undivided efforts, earnest and unswerving as they were, failed often to amuse, and oftener to control, the high-spirited boy, whom his father's gentle firmness had ruled in infancy with a silken cord, whom she loved "too wisely" and truly to spoil, yet lacked the precise skill to discipline or energy to join and direct in his boyish pastimes. This sense of helplessness and of the expediency of more efficient training found a frequent echo in the remarks—characteristically expressed—of her two self-constituted advisers, though not in fact invested with the slightest control, Sir Walter Meredith and Colonel Vandaleur.

The former, whose visits had long been few and far between, and who was fast subsiding into a miser and a misanthrope, would observe, not very delicately, that for a boy who must win his way in the world, the sooner he got some glimpses into that said world the better for his success in it. The Colonel, again, who took, since the lost inheritance, a yet more fatherly charge of Mabel and her boy, would

sometimes gently hint, with a sigh, how essential his late friend the General had considered early male superintendence, in forming the character and habits of a boy—of a future soldier, especially. "It is a pity you could not get over very natural prejudices, Lady Osborne, and make, at least for your boy's sake, the acquaintance of our American neighbour."

When her blunt adviser had left her, Mabel, pursuing the train of thought which he had conjured up, fell into a reverie, the subject of which, of course, was the unvarying kindness and lofty character of him whose loss she so truly still deplored. The evening was wet and stormy, the boy, forbidden to enjoy it out of doors, had gone early to bed; and his mother, unable to settle to any of her ordinary occupations, bethought her of an often deferred task, to which now, however, she felt unaccountably prompted to devote her solitary hours; viz., the opening of a heavy foreign wood *escritoire* belonging to the late Sir Jasper; which, packed up with other bulky articles by the lawyer who superintended the hurried removal from B——, had, with these, been deposited in the first instance at the Hall, and only found its way with the portraits, and other personals, quite lately, to the Hollies.

Had it been by her in the early times of her bereavement, to open and look over the treasures in the handwriting of her lost one, which it might possibly contain, would have seemed easy and natural; nay, it had even been soothing to feelings concentrated on one subject, and incapable of admitting any other. But when time has invested with a sort of awful solemnity the relics it would once have been luxury to handle and weep over, nature shrinks from reopening the scarce cicatrized wound, and rifling, with world-stained hands, the repositories of departed affection. An irresistible impulse, however, now prompted Mabel to conquer this idle repugnance, and interrogate on topics, perhaps of vital importance, to her boy, the hitherto unconsulted oracle.

The key habitually used by the owner had somehow or other been mislaid, and Mabel recollected that while force had been necessary to get at some of the other packages, her mind had revolted from the idea of breaking open her husband's private *escritoire*. Still disinclined to such a mode of attaining her object (one unattainable, had she wished it, till the following day), she began that idle desultory review of her own keys which, on such occasions is resorted to, with slight hope, and less chance of success.

A delicate little Bramah, with whose precise appearance she was not familiar, struck her as likely to suit the lock. But when on being applied it not only fitted the intricate wards, but had evidently been made for them, it flashed on her grateful recollection that on purchasing the desk, within a few months of their happy marriage, her husband, with the chivalrous gallantry of his nature, had presented his wife with the duplicate key; which, had she been endowed with the aggregate curiosity of Blue Beard's seven wives, that very confidence would have precluded her from using.

This delicate touch of tender trustfulness did not tend to nerve her hand while unlocking, with almost a feeling of sacrilege, the *escritoire*, which she now recollected had been hastily closed and removed from the invalid's bed on a sudden attack of faintness; and though once or twice afterwards eagerly asked for, the request, as implying undue exertion, had been gently evaded.

It was, therefore, probably the owner's last earthly sentiments and wishes, which his faltering hands had imperfectly sought to trace; and by them, before going further, Mabel had resolved, nay, even prayed, to be guided. This resolution was not the less fervently reiterated, that the first object which met her eye on opening the desk was her own picture—a lovely, full-length miniature—done in the palmy days of that well-nigh superseded art, by the first artist of the day, in all the bloom of youth and glow of early animation at the age of nineteen—the year in which Cecil Cunliffe's long vacation had been passed at the Hall. The original oil painting from which it was taken had been done for her father; and her brother (whose projected grand tour would, had it taken place, have separated him from his family) had stipulated for a miniature copy, all to himself, of his darling sister.

Thus doubly endeared to memory as the sole heirloom of one lost loved one, it had been transferred, on his death, to Sir Jasper, in whose eyes it had thus acquired an enhanced value; while, to the sad survivor of both, it attained a preciousness she little thought any "counterfeit presentment" of herself could ever acquire. She put it, however, hastily aside, as she did a long fair tress of her still redundant hair, which lay beside the picture, and which she remembered had been cut off on receiving the latter by her husband, with the feint of jealousy (assumed to conceal tenderer feelings, implied in his saying—"this, at least, will be my *very own*!")



Once a Week.]

GROSVENOR SQUARE.—(See page 4.)



[February 5, 1870.]

WILDERNESS ROW.—(See page 7.)

CAUGHT BY A THREAD.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

CHAPTER III.

LORD BIDEFORD became so much interested in the progress of the work which Fenwick Towers had undertaken for him, that soon after it was commenced his lordship expressed a strong desire that it should be written at Brook Street, in order, as he graciously explained, that it might have the advantage of his personal superintendence. Fenwick found it necessary therefore to spend the greater part of his time at the earl's house. It was now autumn; but his lordship was prevented from leaving town for Thorpe Castle by the continued illness of the countess, who had been confined to her room for some weeks. Hardly a day passed without his coming to the library and gravely offering his assistance to Fenwick. On one occasion only did the young man apply to him for some information respecting a certain republic; but his lordship made no attempt to supply it, and showed plainly enough by his manner that he was considerably displeased at finding Fenwick disposed to accept any assistance from him.

One morning when Lord Bideford was in the library with Fenwick, a servant brought in the card of Mr. Poole.

"Really, this is a very—hum—inconvenient time for an interview with me, as I am just going out with Lady Beatrice," said the earl. "Tell him what I say, and inform him that I have only leisure for five minutes' conversation. If he particularly desires to see me, show him in here."

Despite this intimation, the attorney made his appearance. He was a tall thin man of gentlemanlike manners, and had too many men of rank among his clients to feel any special awe in the presence of a nobleman. The earl had somehow become conscious of this, and marked his disapproval of it by assuming more than his usual stateliness when receiving him.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Poole, but I am obliged to beg of you not to detain me long," said the peer, bowing stiffly. "If you wish to speak to me about the new leases, I think you had better—hum—refer the matter to my agent."

"It is a much more important business which has induced me to call upon your lordship," replied Mr. Poole, glancing at Fenwick.

"But is it absolutely necessary that I should be consulted about it to-day? To-morrow afternoon I shall be more at leisure."

"I leave town to-morrow for a week or two, and am therefore anxious to avail myself of this opportunity to enter upon a subject which claims your immediate attention."

Lord Bideford was by no means certain that it was not the lawyer's duty to defer his visit to the country, rather than occasion such a client the slightest inconvenience.

"It is very difficult to imagine that you can have anything so——" His lordship, not being able to find a suitable word to express his meaning, left the sentence unfinished, in accordance with his habit under such circumstances.

"I wish to communicate some intelligence that has reached me respecting Sir Charles Pennington; but as we are not alone I hesitate to do so."

"Allow me to say, Mr. Poole, that I don't desire to hear anything more of that—hum—misguided young man's affairs. You told me on a former occasion that he was upon the eve of bankruptcy, and now I suppose you have brought me the news that he has been taken to prison, or something of that kind. It's exactly what I anticipated—exactly."

"No such thing has yet taken place that I am aware of. Indeed it is almost unnecessary to assure you that I should not have thought it my duty to seek an interview merely to make a communication of that nature."

Fenwick rose from the table at which he was writing and left the room.

"Now that I have an opportunity of speaking to your lordship in private," continued Mr. Poole, "I may explain that there is every reason to believe that Sir Charles really intends to dispute your right to the title which you bear."

"Well, sir, let him dispute it," said the earl, haughtily. "His father was—hum!—insane enough to do so, and you know with what result. A revival of this rumour reached me some weeks ago; but it gave me no concern. In fact, my firm impression is that it has been put into circulation merely for the purpose of annoying me. I regard such a proceeding with the—yes, with the contempt it merits."

"I recollect perfectly the point upon which the Pennington case failed. It is with very great regret I have to inform you that Sir Charles has succeeded in obtaining proof of the Pontifex marriage."

Lord Bideford stared at the attorney, and

for some moments was unable to collect his ideas sufficiently to make any reply.

"This is a most improper assertion on your part," he said at length. "Highly improper, and I beg that you will not repeat it."

"Be assured that I don't venture to do so without having first taken the precaution to ascertain it's the truth, as far as one possibly can. It came to my knowledge recently that Sir Charles, being pressed by one of his creditors, had shown him some time ago a marriage certificate obtained at a place called Doddington, and had stated that it would secure him the peerage of Bideford. Unwilling to trouble your lordship on the subject until I had instituted further inquiries, I waited till one of my clerks had proceeded to Devonshire, and examined the registers at Doddington church. He returned last night bringing me the intelligence that the marriage which we have always disputed really took place."

"It is quite impossible," said the earl, decisively.

"Will you do me the favour to read this certificate," said Mr. Poole, holding out a paper.

"No, I really must decline to do anything of the kind."

The door opened, and Lady Beatrice Thorpe entered. She was in her nineteenth year, extremely delicate in appearance, and without the slightest claim to be considered beautiful. By the advice of her physician, who feared that she had a tendency to consumption, she had spent the previous winter at Nice, and had returned in somewhat improved health, to the great delight of her father.

"As I saw Mr. Towers go out just now, I thought you were alone, papa," she said, pausing near the door. "Have you forgotten that I am waiting for you?"

"This gentleman—Mr. Poole—has detained me. He has just made a most extraordinary statement, and—and I am not at all pleased that he should have ventured to do so."

"I am afraid, my lord, that you don't quite realise the consequences of a proof such as this I hold in my hand being in possession of Sir Charles Pennington's legal adviser," said Mr. Poole, coldly.

"Consequences! I have no—hum—belief that anything more can result from it than a trifling annoyance."

"It is rather unfortunate that you refuse to examine this paper which I have brought to you, because I should like to receive your instructions about it. However, I may briefly tell you that there is no doubt that the fact to

which it relates will cause you the loss of your earldom and estates. If you regard such a result as merely a trifling annoyance I have only to apologise for troubling you, and to take my leave."

"How can you be so obstinate, papa, when you hear Mr. Poole's opinion?" said Lady Beatrice, hurriedly.

"I had no idea that there was anything serious to apprehend," replied the earl, passing his hand across his forehead with a bewildered look.

"Yet I clearly indicated that such was the case at the outset. Sir Charles Pennington only required the proof of a certain marriage having taken place. He has obtained that proof, therefore he is certain of a decision in his favour," said Mr. Poole, quietly.

"But—but something can be done to avert this calamity," rejoined the earl in an altered voice. "It is unjust, it is—yes, monstrous to suppose that I can be deprived of my rights by a scrap of paper."

"Allow me to point out to you that Sir Charles may with equal propriety complain that he has been prevented from establishing *his* claims because he was unable to produce the paper to which you allude," rejoined the attorney, mildly.

"Let me look at it," said the earl abruptly, holding out his hand for the certificate. He read it slowly, and handed it back in silence.

"Is there any possibility of its not being genuine?" asked Lady Beatrice, anxiously.

"My clerk has seen the entry to which it refers, in the church register," answered Mr. Poole. "He also learnt that a gentleman visited Doddington a month or two ago, and obtained a certificate of the same marriage from the parish clerk."

"Have you any advice to offer me?" asked the earl, looking helplessly at Mr. Poole.

"There are only two courses that you can adopt. One is to have the question tried in the usual manner, and the other is to endeavour to effect a compromise. It might be possible to make an arrangement whereby Sir Charles would permit you to retain the title until your death. But of course you would have to surrender to him almost the whole of the estates at once."

"No, no. I am determined to do nothing of the kind. You must place the matter in the hands of the most eminent counsel that you can obtain. Spare no expense. Go to the Attorney-General—"

"He is retained for the other side. Believing that you would decide upon contesting the

matter, I called at his chambers on my way hither. I am glad to find that you at last fully recognise the importance of the business which induced me to seek for an interview to-day."

"Perfectly. Still I feel certain—in fact, certain, that I am Lord Bideford."

"It is very natural you should hold that opinion," said Mr. Poole, smiling. "But I must tell you frankly that unless the House of Lords reject the evidence produced of the marriage at Doddington, there is no chance of your retaining the earldom."

"Come, papa," said Lady Beatrice, "you look pale and distressed. Mr. Poole, under these circumstances, I am sure, will excuse your not prolonging the interview."

"Perhaps you are right, Beatrice, the—hum!—surprise has a little overcome me. Spare no effort to protect my interests, Mr. Poole."

Leaning upon the arm of his daughter, Lord Bideford walked feebly out of the library, followed by the attorney.

Meanwhile Fenwick had directed his steps towards Savile Row. For nearly a fortnight he had received no letter from Mary, and he began to fear, therefore, that illness prevented her from writing to him. If her silence arose from this cause, he knew that Dr. Craven, as the medical attendant of the family at the rectory, would be able to afford him some information respecting the state of her health. The doctor was in the act of getting into his carriage when Fenwick arrived.

"Have you come to consult me professionally?" he said, laughing, as he shook hands with the young man.

"No," replied Fenwick, rather surprised at the question.

"I was quite prepared to hear that you required my services, because I am told that you are shut up for hours daily with that terrible old bore, Lord Bideford."

"That is quite an exaggeration."

"But you are assisting him to write a book, so I suppose you are obliged to be a good deal in his society. He called upon me the other day to make some inquiries about your competency. I had no idea that you had decided upon devoting yourself to literary work; but my confidence in you was sufficient to induce me to recommend you very strongly to him. I think you are one whose talents and temperament harmonize, therefore it is very likely that you will succeed. Where the contrary is

the case, a man is often ambitious without industry—panting for the prize, but unwilling to run the race. Well, as you don't want me to prescribe for you, tell me what you have come about, for the fact is, I am just going out to see my patients, and am already very much behind time."

"Have you paid a visit to Upfield rectory lately?" asked Fenwick, hardly knowing how to introduce the subject about which he was so anxious, without explaining his relations with Mary.

"I am going to dine there this evening."

"Then Mr. Clare and his family are quite well?"

"Oh yes. I have heard nothing to the contrary," said the doctor, carelessly. "By the by, I am told that both the girls are to be married ere long."

"Both!"

"Yes; so I am told by Mrs. Graves-Parr. Florence is to become the wife of Sir Charles Pennington, and a very advantageous match it promises to be for her."

"Very," said Fenwick hurriedly. "But tell me about Mary."

"Mr. Bentley Wyvern is the happy man who is to become her husband."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Fenwick, with energy.

"I don't think it at all impossible. Mr. Clare wrote to me some time ago stating that Mr. Wyvern had proposed to become his son-in-law, and asking me for some information respecting him. I told Clare what I knew of the man—which was very little—and advised him not to give his consent too hastily. The following day I received another letter from him, saying that he had given Mr. Wyvern permission to pay his addresses to Mary."

"Don't let me detain you any longer, doctor," said Fenwick, in a constrained voice.

Dr. Craven looked at him curiously for a moment, and then got into the carriage, which was driven rapidly away.

When Fenwick returned to Brook Street he sat down and wrote a letter to Mary, informing her of what he had heard respecting her intended marriage with Bentley Wyvern, but expressing his complete disbelief in the report, and begging her to write to him without delay. In spite, however, of his undiminished confidence in her love, his thoughts wandered so frequently to Upfield rectory in the course of the afternoon, that he made but little progress with the work he had undertaken for Lord Bideford.

CHAPTER IV.

"IT'S the most mysterious case I ever was engaged in. Reg'lar baffling, I call it." The speaker was Mr. Bender, who was sitting in his house smoking a long clay pipe, and looking with a puzzled expression of face at Porson.

"That's what you always say when you've got anything a bit difficult in hand," remarked Mrs. Bender, contemptuously, as she filled the tea-pot.

"Never mind talking about that just at present, mother. I'll never rest till I find out who committed that murder. Now, Porson, I've sent for you here to-night to tell you as they've given permission for you to assist me in this matter."

"Well, you'll find me willing enough to do that," said Porson.

"Ay, but you must be something more than willing. You'll have to use your brains and make no mistakes. This here business is a very important one. There's a reward offered by the government, and if we succeed it will be a good thing for both of us. I've not yet told you the party as I suspect, because them sort of things are best kept secret as long as possible. But as you're going to work upon the case it's only right as you should know all about it."

"Why, of course it's no use his going poking about in the dark," said Mrs. Bender.

"Just see if the guv'nor is asleep, mother," continued the detective.

Mrs. Bender approached the old man, who was sitting with his eyes closed in his accustomed chair.

"He's gone off sound enough," she said, looking at him.

"You see it's always as well to be cautious, Porson. The guv'nor gets talking to the neighbours sometimes, and he ain't got that control of his tongue as he had when he was younger. He never says much when I'm present, because he's too busy listening; but when I'm away he's fond of having a gossip. Well, the party I suspect as being guilty of the murder in Lombard Street, is named Bentley Wyvern, and he's the manager of the insurance company."

"But it seems very unlikely that a man in such a position as he occupies should commit a crime of that kind," said Porson.

"That's what I say," cried Mrs. Bender, triumphantly.

"I may be wrong, but I don't think it will

turn out so," said Mr. Bender, shaking his head.

"What makes you suspect him?" asked Porson.

"His manner, when first I saw him. I went to his room to tell him about what had happened, and ask him a few questions about Mr. Mansfield. At the outset, I noticed as he didn't seem quite at ease when I spoke to him, which rather surprised me. But when I told him I was a detective officer, he nearly jumped out of his chair, and went as white in the face as chalk. Now I've had a pretty long experience in my profession, consequently it has been necessary for me to announce myself unexpected to a good many people, and I know as no man changes colour under such circumstances, if he is innocent of any crime."

"There's no doubt you are right," observed Porson, thoughtfully.

"On the other hand, I'm quite aware as the fact of a party taking it quite cool is no proof he ain't guilty.

"Some people are more nervous than others," suggested Mrs. Bender.

"Of course they are," said the detective. But I shouldn't call this Mr. Wyvern one of the nervous sort, although he turned pale when he heard I belonged to the police."

"Have you been able to find out where he was at the time Mr. Mansfield was shot?" asked Porson.

"I went down to his house at Upfield," replied Bender, "and found that he took himself off to bed very early that evening.

"Then that settles the question, don't it?" inquired Porson, in a tone of surprise.

"Look here, my friend, if you go jumping to conclusions like that you'll make a good many mistakes by the time your hair is grey," said Bender. "I've no reason to doubt that he *did* retire to his bedroom as early as seven o'clock; but I'm not at all certain he remained there till the next morning. The footman says he didn't see his master again till the following day. However, *that* don't prove a great deal."

"I think it does, though," said Mrs. Bender.

"That's because you've not given as much consideration to the subject as I have. When I was at Mr. Wyvern's house I managed to get admitted to the garden behind, and I noticed that there was a door in the wall of it leading into the road. What was to prevent him from leaving the house by that way without any one seeing him?"

"Nothing that I know of," answered Porson. "But it wouldn't be so easy to get back again unperceived."

"Why not? He would be sure to provide himself with a key of the garden door," rejoined Bender.

"Very likely; but how could he gain admission to the house itself?" asked Porson. "The doors at the back would be fastened for the night by the time he could get back."

"That's more than either you or I can be sure of. Supposing that the crime was committed about nine o'clock, it would be quite easy for this man, Wyvern, to leave Lombard Street at that time, and get home by half-past ten. That wouldn't be so late as to render it likely that the doors at the back of his house would be locked. As to no one having seen him go in or out, I've only heard what the footman has to say."

"Then you ought to question some of the other servants," said Mrs. Bender.

"Can't be done until I've stronger evidence against him than what I have at present. There's been a man I can depend on watching him pretty closely, but he hasn't been able to discover anything of much importance as yet. I want you to take his place, Porson, because he's ordered on other duty. So far I haven't succeeded in finding out where the pistol was bought, but I intend to persevere. To-morrow morning I'll go to Lombard Street with you, and point out Mr. Wyvern, as he enters the insurance office. You'll have to put down in a book every place he goes to, how long he remains, and any other information you can pick up."

"Didn't you say his Christian name was Bentley?" said Porson.

"Yes. Do you know anything about him?" asked the detective, eagerly.

"Nothing whatever. The name struck me because I had a brother who was christened Bentley."

"And what's become of him?"

"Oh I haven't heard of him for years, so I sometimes think he must have died abroad."

"Come, mother," said Mr. Bender, "pour out the tea, and wake up the gov'nor."

APOPTHEGMS FROM HELVETIUS.

THE greatest pleasures of life are often sacrificed to the pride of sacrificing them.

Hannibal, who was blind of an eye, laughed at the painter who represented him with two eyes, but commended him who painted him in profile. Many men cannot bear insipid flattery; but every one likes to have his faults concealed.

The little faults of a great work are the crumbs thrown to envy.

A man said to his son, "You are a fool; but only be decided, and that will repair your folly."

A belief in prejudices passes in the world for good sense.

What is most injurious to the advancement of art and science is the existence of what are called *men of good sense*, who see things clearly—because they cannot see far.

In order to write history well, one should take a middle course between Tacitus, who makes men always act from design, and Plutarch, who makes them always act from passion. In everything, men hover a long time about the end before attaining it.

If you study history, you will find all great actions, whether bad or good, in the periods of transition from one state to another.

When Strength is absent, Justice no longer exists.

Those who are false know least of the world, although they think they know most. They are too much occupied in concealing themselves to be able to observe others. Those who are open and have no vices are content to appear as they are, and can employ their intellect in the study of others.

Many men are led by the fear they have of being led.

Hard councils avail but little; they are like the hammer which always recoils from the anvil.

Every object has so many different sides that we should always examine—never dispute.

Those who are accustomed to public speaking learn more how to convey their ideas than to discover truths.

A clever man is often called a madman; for the listener has only the alternative of thinking himself a fool, or the clever man mad—and the latter is much easier.

We should be more slow to condemn the opinion of a great man than of an entire people.

Organisation does everything in this world; and this is why the Jesuits have played so much greater a part in its history than the other religious orders.

TABLE TALK.

THOSE who love to find an evening's entertainment in a theatre a source of intellectual pleasure, and not merely a series of spectacles and sensation stage effects must have been sadly disappointed to have read of the failure of the laudable efforts of Mr. Barry Sullivan, of the Holborn Theatre Royal, to revive a taste for the legitimate drama. The large sum of money which he has risked and lost in the space of a few months in his praiseworthy endeavours to produce this desirable result speaks volumes for the degeneracy of the dramatic taste of the play-going public. No critic has found fault with the matter of the plays produced, or the manner in which they were put upon the stage—and yet, incredible as it may appear, out of the vast number of play-goers in London, a small theatre like the Holborn could not obtain full audiences for plays so admirable, and so admirably put upon the stage as “Money,” “The Lady of Lyons,” the “School for Scandal,” or “Love’s Sacrifice.” The lessee of the Drury Lane Theatre stated, in a letter to the *Times* in defence of “Formosa,” that for him “Shakspeare spelt ruin and Byron bankruptcy,” and what he has found to be true of his theatre in Drury Lane, has been pretty nearly verified in the case of the theatre in Holborn. In the reign of Elizabeth, Will Shakspeare’s plays found a rival for the public favour in the highly intellectual pastime of bull-baiting; but in the reign of Victoria, the legitimate drama has found a more formidable but not much more intellectual rival in the inane doggrel, the feeble wit, and the scanty costumes of the popular burlesques. *Altiora in votis!* Can nothing be done to educate the taste of the play-going world?

A NEW EDITION of the celebrated Tom and Jerry book, “Life in London,” has just been produced, and, it is to be feared, that it must be classed among the indelicacies of the literary season. To be sure it was dedicated to the king; but, the king was the fourth of the Georges; and, its present publisher tells us that it “was often quoted by Thackeray.” Probably the most remarkable commendation of the work that was ever printed in a journal of repute, was in the essay on “George Cruikshank,” in *Blackwood’s Magazine* for July, 1823. The essay was written by Professor Wilson, and contains the following passage:—“But, what a start did he make when his

genius had received a truer and a *diviner* impulse from the splendid imagination of an Egan? How completely, how *toto cælo*, did he out-Cruikshank himself, when he was called upon to embody the conceptions of that remarkable man in the designs for Tom and Jerry. The world felt this, and he felt it himself.” Certainly, Cruikshank’s etchings and wood-block drawings in this volume deserve high praise even among those 4618 works, of his of which, thanks to the painstaking industry of Mr. G. W. Reid, Messrs. Bell and Daldy will shortly give to the public a full annotated list, in a book which will in itself be a monument to the fame of George Cruikshank. This work of Mr. Reid’s will supplement the very imperfect list of the artist’s productions given in the “Universal Catalogue of Art Books” issued in the National Department of Science and Art. Moncreiff’s dramatic version of “Tom and Jerry,” greatly helped to extend the celebrity of the book. Thackeray’s best known mention of the work and its “wondrous history,” and “queer volumes,” will be found in his article on John Leech in the *Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1855, and no lover of George Cruikshank’s productions should omit to read the criticism passed upon them by Ruskin, in “Modern Painters,” iv. 367, and again in the same work, v. 271. Speaking of Cruikshank as a real master of caricature, Mr. Ruskin says, “taken all in all, the works of Cruikshank have the most sterling value of any belonging to this class produced in England.”

SAID THE MASTER OF THE LOAVES, the other day to a leading Q. C. “Mr. —, how is it you are so often out of court, when your cases are called?” Said the Q. C. to the Master of the Loaves. “My time and attention my lord, are so constantly occupied with Loaves Appeals.”

NOT A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, in the fair metropolis of the Emerald Isle, “dear, dirty, Dublin,” there dwelt a much respected lady, whose husband was a Knight. The grandeur of civic state and formal hospitality, sat not easily upon her ladyship’s soul; and many were the blunders she committed and the tales that the wicked wags told concerning them. At length she hit upon an expedient for ending her troubles; it was simple; it was practicable; it was effective. Judge of it from this illustration. Her ladyship was one of the guests at a stately banquet. The Lord L—t—t was also there. Crossing the room to the sofa on which her ladyship was seated,

his lordship said, "How do you, Lady O'—?" Her ladyship simply stared, vouchsafing no reply. His lordship repeated his question a second and a third time, with the same result. Then he quietly retired. "Are you aware that the Lord L—nt—t, spoke to you, Lady O'—?" asked a friend, who sat near her. "Yis, but I jaust t'ought I'd say nauthin' for I niver open me mouth, but I putt me futt in it."

AMONG A NUMBER of almanacks that have reached us, we have had several from the insurance companies. We give the palm to the capital little almanack issued by the *Royal*. It is very neatly got up and contains a large amount of varied and useful information. We observe that in ten years there has been an increase of £279,424 on the amount of the premiums annually paid for fire insurances, and of £156,865 on those paid on life policies. There can be no better proof than that afforded by these figures of the flourishing state of the company's affairs, and of the hold it has upon the public confidence.

IN A PAPER on "Vanished and Vanishing Industries," in the *Leisure Hour* for Nov. 20, 1869, "the clatter of pattens," is spoken of as among the sounds of the past. This, however, is a mistake. Pattens are still in common use, more especially in country places, although they have long been restricted to the category in which the poet Gay placed them, when he described pattens as a "female implement." His "Trivia" gives a fanciful explanation of the origin of the "implement," which was at that time (1812) in ordinary use, and which was worn, within memory, by a man—the eccentric Sir John Dinely. But, with another sense, the word is still in common use in Eastern England, where "pattens" is the ordinary East-Anglian name for a pair of skates; and where "patten races," on the Lincolnshire washes and meres annually attract thousands of spectators. A skilled patten-racer will accomplish a spurt that would be at the rate of a mile in a minute provided that the wind and course are in his favour. This East-Anglian patten is the French *patin*, known to opera frequenters from the *Pas des Patineurs*, which took the town by storm, when introduced at Her Majesty's Theatre, in 1842, in the ballet *Les Plaisirs de l'Hiver*, with Rosati and M. Charles for the chief skaters. And Shakspeare's "patines of bright gold"—for we may set on one side Mr. Collier's emendation of "patterns"—that were thick inlaid in "the floor of heaven," are

etymologically connected with the skating pattens. For, the patines were, like the mosaics in a pavement, what were under foot; and the word came from the Greek *πάρος* and *παρέω*; and thus, the word *paten* was also used for the base of a column (or footstool) and the sill (the sole) of a window. Evelyn mentions skates shod with iron as being used in London in the great frost of 1662; and they were at that time a novelty. The skates previously in use were (as mentioned by Stow) pieces of bone strapped under the foot.

MR. FISKE'S "English Photographs—by an American," tells us a few home truths. His photographs, like those of pretty women, are not flattering, but they are generally true. He discusses our railway system, and gives an account, that is only too true, of the misery and discomfort of our night travelling. His picture of a night journey in America, is so delightful that we almost wonder some English directors do not get a sleeping carriage constructed on the American principle—for themselves! However, I suppose we must be content with the reply given to Mr. Fiske by an English engine driver when he asked him how it was that the engines were not covered as in America. "It never has been done, sir; and we gets on pretty well as we are!"

IN NEW YORK there is a general tendency to deal in superlatives. The numerous journals are most of them given to "tall talk," but I think it will be admitted that when speaking of itself, the *New York Ledger* leads the van; we extract, from the *American Booksellers' Guide*, its prospectus for the year 1870:—

THE NEW YORK LEDGER,

For the New Year, 1870.

THE GREAT FAMILY PAPER.

More money is spent upon the *Ledger* to make it a good paper than is spent upon any other paper in the world. More people take it and like it than ever took any other paper on this continent. It is so interesting that families who once begin to take it can never bear to give it up; and they always consider that the small price which it costs affords them more for the money than anything else that they buy. The *Ledger* is always full of life. Nobody ever complains that even a single number is dull. It has the largest number of great and distinguished writers. It contains the purest, sweetest, and most delightful love stories, striking narratives, and instructive biographical and historical sketches. All questions growing out of the domestic relations, lovers' quarrels, law and business matters, are regularly answered in its columns. A vast amount of useful information is given through this attractive department of the *Ledger*. The principal Bishops, Doctors of Divinity, and Clergymen write for it. All the ol

writers—their names are familiar to the public, and it is needless to repeat them here—will continue to write for the *Ledger*, for we pay them higher prices than anybody else can afford to; and we have engaged exclusively for the *Ledger* the very best and most popular of the rising authors. Good as the *Ledger* has heretofore been, the volume for 1870 will be better than any one ever yet published.

This is pretty strong in its way, but it is also pretty truthful. The *Ledger* sells upwards of 377,000 copies.

IT USED TO BE, and is still, with a certain class of aspiring young men, a fixed opinion that genius is consumptive, and dies young. With this idea, pale cheeks were much desired—a marble brow, and a general appearance of pallor and fatigue, as if the intellect was too much for the body. An examination which I have just made into the duration of life among men of letters will, perhaps, help to dispel any lingering remains of this belief. *I believe they live longer than any other class of men.* Judges, it is true, live long; but they are picked men, and advanced in life when they become judges. Of bishops the same remark may be made. And perhaps, also, of eminent physicians. I have made three groups of English writers of the last three centuries:—the first class of poets; the second of historians, novelists, and essayists; the third of theologians and philosophers. The last class, as was to be expected from their quiet and regular habits, live longest. Their average expectation of life is close upon 70 years—the youngest on my list being Chillingworth, who died at 42, while good Bishop Berkeley just reached the average, his pious and useful life being prolonged to 69 years. The second class may only look for 62 years; but they have had misfortunes. Addison died at 47, Smollett at 51, Fielding at 47, Steele at 53, Hugh Miller at 54, Strype, however, was cut off, not very prematurely, at 94, while Walton died at 90, Stow at 80, Jeffery at 77, and Bishop Burnet at 72. But let no man take to poetry—he can only look for a life of 59 springs. Though here there is comfort. If he gets beyond the age of misfortune, say 37, even the poet may rub his hands. At the outset, however, he must reflect on Kirke White, Chatterton, Marlowe, Byron, Burns, Shelley, Otway, and Alexander Smith, who all died before 37. Afterwards, he may comfort himself with the examples of Wordsworth, Waller, Young, Herrick, Bowles, and Montgomery, who all achieved 80, and with a goodly list of bards who have been tuneful after 70. In fact, the few figures which I have put together go

far to prove what I had always suspected, that a life of letters is, if not always lucrative, generally conducive to long life. A profession which gives such averages of life as 59, 62, and 69, must surely be one in which the mind and body work pretty well together. Let me, however, be considered as comforting the actual world of literary men, rather than as encouraging aspirants. Let these think rather of the awful examples of wasted midnight oil, genius unappreciated by editors and publishers, and early graves.

WE HEAR there is a rumour, in legal circles, that the Lord Chancellor and Lord Cairns have been laying their wigs together with a view to the amalgamation of the courts of law and equity. It has often been mentioned as a hobby of the Lord Chancellor's. The effect of giving courts of common law and equity a concurrent jurisdiction would be to revolutionize the existing state of things. We should be applying to the Court of Common Pleas for an injunction, and bringing an action for damages in the Court of Chancery. One good result of such a measure would be that we should have more judges from whom to choose.

THE REV. E. L—T, who resided some years at Hampton Court, had an old parishioner and communicant, whom he had been visiting during a short illness. At last the medical attendant called and informed Mr. L—t that the old man was dying; whereupon he immediately went to him to administer the sacrament. After which he told the old man's wife that her husband would not live long, and if there was anything she wished to say to him, she had better do it whilst he was able to understand her. She immediately went to his bedside, and said "John, Mr. L—t says you're goin' to dee. I wish when you git to heaven you'd look out for my first husband and tell him I've been doin' pratty well sin' he laft me, an' I often wish I might see him agin'." The old man turned his eyes upon his wife with a deprecating expression, and raising himself a little, replied, "Lord help thee, Meary, how do'est thee think that oud and la'am as I be I can go raunging all o'er heaven to find thy first husband?"

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ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

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THE MORTIMERS: A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK I.—CHAPTER I.

THE HOUSE IN BARTHOLOMEW SQUARE.



INCE the events recorded in the prologue to this life history, the great hand of old Time's clock has marked eleven yearly revolutions on the dial of space.

In an old red-brick house in Bartholomew Square dwells, now as then, the French surgeon, Dr. Gasc. This house was built in the reign of George II., of blessed memory, by an India merchant, who lived and died in it, and whose ghost, for aught I know, may haunt it still: a great, solid, solemn, red-brick house, with disproportionately small windows, heavy oak frames and sashes, dark green shutters, and up a flight of stone steps, a dark green front door, with a bright brass knocker, the only lively object about it. On each side of the stone steps were heavy iron railings, greatly in want of a coat of paint, and up the front of the house there grew a rusty Virginia creeper, that was never green in summer and

never was known to become red in autumn. The city smoke turned the leaves of this melancholy plant black every year, almost before they were green, and when they should in the course of nature have changed to a fiery hue, they dropped off instead, one by one, with a mournful rustle, into the area below. In this cheerless house, however, there lived one of the most cheerful of exiles.

Achille Esmè de Gasc, Count de Gasc, was born in the year 1790, on the paternal estate at the Chateau Gasc, near the little town of Amours, in the province of Gascogne. His father and, as far as this historian knows, all his family were zealous adherents of the old dynasty; but Achille early embraced those republican doctrines in politics, and sceptical notions in religion which, at that time, captivated the minds and won the hearts of all the clever young men in France. Scarce three years old when Louis XVI. was executed, the first great political event he recollected was the establishment of the Consulate; embracing the tenets of Napoleonism, he worshipped the genius of the First Consul; at fourteen, he followed at Notre Dame in the magnificent and pompous pageant, when the First Consul made himself an emperor. At sixteen, he joined the army, and followed the victorious Corporal to Berlin; at one-and-twenty, he marched with Soult from Seville to Albuera, and there was taken prisoner by Lord Wellington's army, and was afterwards conveyed to London in a British man-of-war.

At that time there were 50,000 French prisoners in England: of these the officers, for the most part, strolled about in the country towns, playing at cards and billiards, killing time as best they could; while the common soldiers were employed on the public works. Clever men these common soldiers were, skilful in dining well off a bone with no meat on it, and carving it afterwards into the ingenious toys which were the marvellous delights of our fathers' childhood; skilful in converting their daily dole of bread into savoury soups and fricassees; making the

best of a hard lot. Men and toys now gone for ever !

The young French prisoner of whom we speak, Achille de Gasc, after being some time in England, went to live in Edinburgh. In that place—then one of the best schools of physic in Europe—the young officer, whose passion for war was now spent, turned his keen and active mind to the study of the natural sciences, and sought the favour of Athena with even greater vigour and a more constant devotion than he had paid to the altar of Ares ere he sacrificed his boyish liberty at the shrine of the bloody god. He was at an age when the mind advances rapidly in all ways ; his opinions changed, his ambitious desires waned, the glories of the field faded in the light of the student's lamp ; the fascination of his scientific pursuits daily grew more engrossing ; he studied as he had fought, with the energy of an enthusiast, he rapidly acquired knowledge, and soon became one of the most distinguished students of the Schools.

From his lodging high up four pairs of stairs, Achille de Gasc and the little band of exiles, his compatriots and friends, looked forth upon the great arena of European politics, and beheld with darkening visages the falling fortunes of their idol.

Through the perils of the disastrous Russian campaign, to the loss of the twelve thousand on the field of Lutzen ; through his Austrian battles, to the defeat on the plains of Leipsic and the disorderly retreat to Erfurt, these young Frenchmen watched with anxious regard the movements of the Great General. Through his after campaign, not for conquest and glory, but for the very existence of his crown and the maintenance of his liberty, to the fall of Paris, the exiles watched him struggling with the waters of disaster, and battling with the waves of destiny, like a soldier to the last. Tears streamed from the eyes of Achille as they read in the news sheet of his last adieux to the Old Guard in the courtyard of the chateau at Fontainebleau, an Emperor no longer. The Empire was no more. Now the young exile might return to France, but to France under a Bourbon prince. For him, her glories had departed with the last days of the Empire. When Louis XVIII. began to govern at Paris, Achille de Gasc was beginning to practise as a surgeon in London.

In the old red-brick house in Bartholomew Square he lived and practised for a quarter of a century. His skill and the perfect polish of his manners recommended him to the rich ;

his kindness, his charity, and a habit he had of taking no fee, ensured him a plenty of patients among the poor. As he grew older, his opinions became more republican ; a worshipper of civil liberty, he loved our English institutions ; a shrewd observer of character, his early prepossession in favour of the trusty cautious Scotch developed into a hearty regard for the people of his adopted country. " In England I have made my home ; in England I will remain," he was wont to say. So he stayed in the old red-brick house the merchant had built, got money enough for his simple wants from his profession, and devoting much of his time to the pursuit of science, he was shut up with the fossils and phials, and dusty books in his library, while his parlour was the rendezvous of the patriots and the focus of intrigue. These busy people were always coming and going from the house in Bartholomew Square, smoking their cigarettes, taking their snuff, and drinking absinthe and black coffee in the front parlour. Constitutions were made, frontiers were re-adjusted, the very destinies of Europe were settled in that room, by the gentlemen with moustaches, dirty linen, and frogged coats, sitting in conference there and promising death to all tyrants.

Besides the surgeon, the red-brick house had other inmates : these were Madam Bridget McAra, his housekeeper, a tall gaunt Irish-woman of rather more than middle age—indeed, Madam had arrived at that time of life at which a lady's age may be allowed to remain stationary for some years. Her hair was becoming grey, her complexion was very swarthy, and Madam had hair on her upper lip amounting to a moustache many a young guardsman would have been proud of ; altogether though, Madam's was a pleasant face—she had soft brown eyes and her brown cheeks were often dimpled with smiles and she was always good-tempered and kind, at least to little Reginald Erle, whom we first saw a baby, crumpling up his tiny fist in his cradle in Wilderness Row, now grown into a handsome boy, with fine liquid eyes and long light curls.

Father Francis Lavelle, a Jesuit, and the bosom friend of the surgeon, completed the family circle. Father Francis, of the oratory of St. Philip Neri, was a bland affable man, of most persuasive speech and winning manners. His voice was soft and musical, the expression of his features almost saintly, his long hair falling back from his smoothly shaven face. In his broad-brimmed hat and long black coat, the good father was always active among the patriots and revolutionists who frequented the

house; he was Reginald's first instructor in the mysteries of *amo* and *hic hæc hoc*; he was Madam McCara's spiritual director, and would have guided the surgeon in the right way, but that Dr. Gasc poohed the whole affair, and would have none of it; but he and his would-be confessor talked philosophy and politics by the hour together, discussing over and over again the stirring events that had happened in France since they were boys at the College together.

Rather a singular household, good Dr. Gasc's was. Father Francis was the ruling spirit; Madam was his selection, and her special charge was Master Reginald; but the little tyrant knew his power, and was a sad unruly boy, giving Madam endless trouble. The doctor loved not Madam's ways, but Father Francis gave her his unflinching support, for she was one of the faithful, and served, he very likely thought, to avert Heaven's wrath from that arch-doubter, her master.

For some four or five years before the time of which we write, Dr. Gasc, having inherited a moderate fortune, had ceased to pursue his profession, only continuing to prescribe for such of the poor about him as needed help and charity. Life had for him two principal objects—the pursuit of science, and the careful culture of his adopted child. The tendrils of that little vine clung tightly round the old French oak; for Reginald Erle, the surgeon felt all the tenderness of a mother's love, even the absorbing love of a gentle mother for her only noble son. He intended for him the best education England could afford. He planned for him a career. He hoped to remove every obstacle from his path. To tell truth, between the good doctor, and Madam, and Father Francis, the young urchin stood a great chance of being spoiled.

CHAPTER II.

MADINGLEY CHASE.

IN a picturesque part of the county of Berks, some two or three miles from the line of the great western road from London to Bath, is Madingley Chase, the ancient seat of the Mortimers, a noble old Gothic mansion, standing in a park of great extent, boasting oaks and elms and beeches as fine as any in a county justly famous for the number and size of its trees. Nature had been lavish in bestowing upon Madingley the beauties that combine to produce a perfect English rural scene. By common report Madingley was held the

queen of the Berkshire villages, and tourists came miles to see the house and park, both rich in beauty and interest. Nor had the favour bestowed by nature upon their residence been denied to the family that dwelt in it. From time immemorial the Mortimers had been a noble race, of handsome men and fair women. The William de Mortimer, who came over with the Conqueror, was among the stoutest of his train; Guy, who accompanied Richard to the Holy Land, was celebrated in song as

“Ye bravest and ye fairest knight, in all ye
righteous band;”

Everard, who was made a knight banneret beneath the royal standard of Charles the First, was always the brave and trusted servant of that unfortunate prince; Sir Hugh Mortimer fought at Malplaquet under the Duke of Marlborough, and was made a general officer for his distinguished services in that engagement; and Sir Harold, the present possessor of Madingley, was with Wellington at Waterloo. Thus it will be seen the Mortimers were a military race. It usually fell to the lot of the eldest son to be the soldier. Other sons filled prominent positions in the state, and sometimes—but rarely—we find a Mortimer in the church. Though unennobled, the family of the Mortimers was as good, and their blood as blue, as that of any of the noble families to which Berkshire gives a title of nobility; and they married and intermarried with the Hungerfords, Despencers, Maltons, and Cholmondeleys, who lived in their native county, and had lived there since such time as the memory of man runneth not to the contrary.

It was high festival at Madingley. Christmas was always kept at the Chase with profuse hospitality, the rich were feasted and the poor regaled by Sir Harold in a style worthy of England in the time of good Queen Bess. This year was no exception to the rule; the house was full of visitors. Sir Harold was entertaining his brother Robert, the member for Malton, and his wife, and son, about whose birth at the house in Grosvenor Square, on the cold first of January, now eleven years ago, we read in the prologue; Sir Everard Despencer and his daughter, the little Mabel; the young Marquis of Malton, to whom Sir Harold was a guardian, and his tutor Mr. Campbell, and a whole host of cousins and relatives who made an annual Christmas visit to the Chase; while the dinner party was supplemented every day by beviés of the neighbouring gentry, the

Childerses, Vavaseurs, Verelsts, and others whose names are so well known in the county, who came in their family coaches with tall sons and rosy daughters to join in the Christmas festivities at the Chase.

The Sir Harold Mortimer, mentioned before as the present owner of the Chase, was the son of the Sir Harold who appeared in the prologue. That gentleman was twice married. By his first lady he had a son and a daughter, the present baronet and Miss Margaret Mortimer, who lived with her brother at Madingley. By the second wife he had two sons, Robert, the member for Malton, and a brother who died abroad. Between the two half-brothers, Robert and Sir Harold, there was a great difference in age, in person and in sentiment. Sir Harold, when he succeeded his father in the estates, was a colonel in the army, well known for his high honour and fondness for sport of all kinds, but especially for his good fortune on the turf. He was a tall, strongly built man, with a soldier's frankness and easy bearing, the very soul of honour and generosity. He enjoyed the highest popularity in the county, and was held in the highest esteem by his tenants and servants. Having lost his wife early in life, he had not thought proper to contract a second marriage, and had been a widower for many years; his sister, Miss Margaret, a spinster, past the hope of matrimony, living with him and doing the honours of the table.

Robert Mortimer's person and something of his character have already been described. He had married the daughter of a banker, a Whig, made a peer by his party, shortly after Robert Mortimer became his son-in-law, to whose great disgust the old Whig banker actually married the daughter of a poor duke and had another family, so that all Robert Mortimer ever got of the great fortune he expected with his wife was the sum settled on her at her marriage, and, poor lady, he led her a sad life of it afterwards. Sir Harold was a staunch old-fashioned high and dry Tory; Robert, his brother, was a thorough-paced Radical, now sitting in parliament for Malton, in which borough the family influence was very great, and holding an under-secretaryship in the Pink Tape Office. Robert Mortimer was a vain and discontented man. His life had been a failure; carrying to Eton talents far above the average, he left it with his reputation, to say the least, blown upon; beginning life a Tory, as became one of his name, he married the banker's daughter for gold he never got, and he ratted at the wrong moment

to obtain power and place in a ministry that only lived a few days after. His next offer of his services was ignominiously rejected by the then Liberal Premier, and here he was—proud, ambitious, extravagant and poor—and at thirty-nine only an under-secretary in the Pink Tape Office. True, he was presumptive heir to the Madingley estates, but his brother Harold's life was probably worth two of his own, and his only consolation under the circumstances was that his boy would succeed to them.

Miss Margaret was like her brother Harold, and wholly unlike their half-brother Robert; a little stiff and prim in her manner, perhaps, but perfectly well-bred, carrying her age well, and looking very stately as she sat at Sir Harold's table, or took her place in the family pew at church.

The gentlemen who were staying at the Chase had been popping at the pheasants all day, and had been successful in making a great bag. In the evening Miss Margaret had a juvenile dance.

The ball-room was a blaze of light, and the servants were busily engaged in putting a finishing touch to the preparations. The picture-gallery—one of the glories of the house—a noble room of great length, with walls of old oak panel, hung with priceless portraits by Holbein, Vandyck, Reynolds, and other painters—led, up a flight of broad oak stairs, flanked by the grotesque carvings of Grinling Gibbons, into the ball-room at the east, and into the great drawing-room at the west end. In this splendid gallery, Miss Margaret Mortimer was receiving her little guests. Tea and coffee in ancient silver urns were served at a buffet in one of the great embayed windows: the fiddles were scraping and tuning in the orchestra; the merry voices of the children resounded through the room, and presently, with a great buzz of talking and laughing, up came the gentlemen from dinner. Sir Everard Despencer, whose lands joined Sir Harold's, came first with my Lord Berkhamstead, whose little daughters were coming to the dance; then came Robert Mortimer, with the Dean of St. Ives, followed by Sir Harold and a dozen others. Old Sir Everard, a wizened antiquated little fop, in very tight clothes, and a very juvenile wig, who was perpetually twiddling with the heavy gold eye-glasses, suspended round his neck by a broad black riband, as a great London man of fashion, was the lion of the party. He seldom lived at Despencer Castle, but when he did honour Berkshire with his presence he made it his

business to set everybody right on every imaginable topic. He took the Dean to task on matters of church policy; he told Robert Mortimer what to say in his next speech; he instructed Sir Harold in the breeding and training of thoroughbred stock, and communicated his ideas on turnips and shorthorns to that great agriculturist, old Squire Frampton; he had the presumption to correct Captain Cholmley about the length of a course at Newmarket, and to put Mr. Campbell right in a quotation from Horace: for Lady Squallwell he had the latest musical gossip, and for Miss Margaret the last fashionable intelligence; he epitomised the court news for Mrs. Carington, and delighted the dowager Lady Berkhamstead with a heavenly scandal. So you may be sure Sir Everard was universally liked. Being deaf, he spoke loudly enough to make himself heard, which was not an easy matter, and he talked away incessantly in a cracked voice, parading the room with an old-fashioned smirk, which showed his false teeth to great disadvantage.

"Oh, Mr. Campbell" (Camel, Sir Everard called it), "I wanted to talk to you at dinner, but I never got a chance—positively not one. I do like somebody to talk to, who can understand me."

Mr. Campbell—a stout short man, made remarkable by being arrayed in a surtout coat, having an insuperable objection to swallow tails—acknowledged Sir Everard's intended compliment by a stiff bow.

Sir Everard button-holed him and walked him up and down the gallery, talking in a loud voice, and accompanying his speech, as was his wont, with very animated and unnecessary gestures.

"I was looking for you after lunch," he continued, making a number of cuts in the air with his right hand. "They have been shooting the poor pheasants all day. I never shoot now, I used to be the best shot in the old Pigeon Club in my shooting days. I mean the Prince Regent's Club you know. Robert Mortimer can't shoot a bit." The member for Malton was close by, and Sir Everard spoke in a voice calculated to be heard pretty distinctly a hundred yards off.

"Do you approve of battue shooting, sir?" inquired Mr. Campbell, with a very broad Scotch accent.

"No, I do not," replied the baronet, in large capitals. "I call it slaughter—yes, slaughter, I call it—no battue shooting on my land. I always tell Mortimer he may shoot my pheasants. I never—Lady Barton, how do you do?"—and he ran off to make his bow to her

ladyship; returning to Mr. Campbell, he continued—"Let us see—what was I saying—oh, have you been to see Mortimer's horses? We went to see the one that won the Derby two years ago—what was its name?—Mortimer, what was that horse's name?"

"Peccadillo," replied Sir Harold.

"Eh?" said Sir Everard, improvising an ear-trumpet with his hand.

"Peccadillo," cried Sir Harold, raising his voice.

"Oh, ah, Piccadilly. I recollect. I know it reminded me of Sydney Smith—something Sydney Smith said—'pon my soul I've forgotten what it was Sydney Smith said. Well, he is short in the forearm. Don't you think he's short in the forearm?"

"I never express any opinion on matters I know nothing about," returned Campbell.

"Um?" said Sir Everard, inquiringly.

Mr. Campbell repeated his remark in a louder tone, attracting the attention of everybody in the room.

"Oh, ah; why yes—quite right—I never do myself; that has been my rule all through life. I wish," he added, looking round, "I wish nobody did."

"Your old friend is in great spirits to-night," Lord Berkhamstead remarked to Sir Harold.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH REGINALD TURNS ELEVEN.

It was the boy's eleventh birthday; a mild damp first of January. Madam McArA was seated in the breakfast room, awaiting the other members of the family. The boy came in carolling gaily by the side of Father Francis.

"Good-morning, my young gentleman," exclaimed Madam, as soon as she saw him, "I wish you many returns of your birthday."

"Thank you, Madam Macaire," cried Regy. The patriots and visitors all softened McArA into Macaire, as was natural they should.

"Give me me name, sorr. Carl me McArA," said Madam. This answer Regy expected. Madam and he fought many a battle about her name.

"Come here and kiss me, sorr, directly?"

But this injunction young my lord disobeyed, and Madam pursued him into a corner, and after much ado she succeeded in getting her kiss.

"What nave I got this year, Father?" cried the boy laying hold of Lavelle's hand and leading him up to a table, over which a white cloth was spread to cover the presents under it.

"Nay, my boy, I do not know," said the Father.

"You know some," said Reginald. "Come, tell, or I'll pull off the cloth," and he made a feint of doing so, which brought up Madam again with a scream.

"Be patient, sorr, and wait for your uncle to come, or maybe you'll get nothing at all."

Reginald's name for Dr. Gasc was his Good Uncle, and the Good Uncle was always the last to come down to breakfast. This morning, however, he was not long behind the others; the boy heard his footstep on the stairs, and jumped out the room to meet him, giving him a boisterous greeting.

"Uncle I want the presents uncovered now you are come."

"So be it, my child," said the Doctor, with a genial smile. They all walked up to the table, the Good Uncle, gazing fondly on the radiant face of the boy. "Open sesame," said he; "let us pull off the cover."

"Oh my! fencing swords and a little mask," cried Regy. "Madam Macaire, I'll fight you now."

"Give me me name, sorr, call me Mc——"

Reginald managed to drown the rest of Madam's sentence, by putting his hand over her mouth. The Doctor, Madam, and Lavelle stood by, while Regy unwrapped his birthday gifts with a boy's delight. There were the foils, and a whip, and a costly copy of "Thomas à Kempis" from the good Father Francis, and books and bonbons and a silver dog-whistle from Madam.

"But," cried Regy "where is uncle's present!"

The Good Uncle smiled, and made a gesture enjoining silence on Madam and Lavelle.

"Ah! I know. I guess. You have given me the pony," and he jumped up to kiss his Good Uncle.

"Victor," he cried to the doctor's servant, who was entering with the chocolate and rolls, "Victor, is there a pony in the stable for me?" Old Victor smiled and produced from his pocket some bonbons and a bunch of violets for little monsieur.

"Ah! I see there is. I shall go now directly and see it. Come, Victor, come with me."

"Indeed, sorr, and you'll take breakfast first and see the pony after," said Madam.

"I shall do as I like, at least to-day, Madam Mac-aire," cried the aggravating urchin.

"Give me me name, sorr——" shouted Madam, but the rest of her sentence was lost to Regy, for he had bounded away with Victor to see his new pony.

When he came back, his face all a-glow with health and pleasure, he looked so delighted the Good Uncle was more than repaid.

Reginald went to him and seated himself on his knee. Madam poured the chocolate from the silver pot; there were not four happier people in all London.

"I shall ride now every day, uncle," said Regy, "shall I not? And Madam can ride too, if she is not too heavy," he added in French, which he spoke with fluency and with a perfect accent, thanks to the care of Lavelle.

"I know who is a rude boy," said Madam, in French, too. She said she had the accent of the Tuileries. The Tuileries of Cork, my good Madam.

"And we will fence together, as you promised, Good Uncle," said Regy.

"Every gentleman should be able to use his sword," said the Doctor, with pride. "Do you not think so, Father Francis?"

"The sword in the field; the pen in the state; the tongue in the church," replied Lavelle, who could use all three with no mean skill.

"Priests don't fight, father," cried Regy.

"Time was when they did, boy," said Lavelle.

"It may be they will again. The sacred precincts of the church are compassed round by bellowing bulls of Bashan. Her priests——"

"Bah!" cried the Doctor, interrupting the eloquent outburst of Father Francis, "and serve them right."

Knowing there was no sympathy to be expected from that quarter, the father was silent. Though Doctor Gasc loved the Jesuit, yet, old doubter that he was, he despised the doctrines and hated the influence of the church. It was a compact between them that Lavelle should not influence the mind of Reginald in favour of the older Christian church. "An Englishman, born in England, if among other ills he must have a religion, he shall be a Protestant," said the Doctor, and stoutly he maintained his point like an old soldier. How soon Lavelle was to resign his post of tutor we shall see.

So they chatted gaily enough till breakfast was over. The Doctor went out into the garden to take his morning walk, some fifty times up and down the broad gravel path. Madam went off to attend to her household duties. Lavelle and Reginald stayed in the room.

"How good of uncle to buy me the pony!" he said, putting a bonbon into his mouth.

"Here, too, is something more he has told me to give you," said Lavelle; and putting his

hand into the pocket of his coat, he produced a little ivory miniature of a young officer in a scarlet uniform. The picture was set in a border of pearls, and there was attached to it a thin gold chain of foreign workmanship; on the back of the locket was inscribed "R. M., 183—," and above these initials a crest was engraved. The boy was pleased with the pretty trinket, and looked on it with admiring eyes.

"Take it, Reginald, my child," said Father Francis, unbuttoning the boy's coat and placing the chain round his neck, "take it, and be careful never to lose it. Wear it always next your heart: it was your mother's."

"My mother's?" cried Regy, doing as he was bid with unquestioning trust.

"Your mother's, my son," replied the Jesuit. "Your mother who is in heaven."

It was a pretty sight to see the noble-looking priest seated in the window commanding the garden, with the handsome great-limbed boy on his knee. "Why," he cried, after a silence of some moments, "I declare uncle has left his penknife on the table; he will want it for his pens—I will run down with it."

"Stay a minute," replied Father Francis, "we spoke just now of your mother. 'Tis well to think of her and try to do what would have been pleasing to her."

Regy sat looking, with his large melting eyes fixed on Lavelle's face.

"You have, too, a never-dying mother above, who loves you, cares for you, pleads for you, and who will never desert you. Sit on my knee then, and let me hear you repeat the two verses I taught you from the hymn to the Blessed Virgin, my son. Come, 'Sancta Maria.'"

Though somewhat loath to stay, Master Regy consented, and repeated the verses:—

Sancta Maria
Sancta virgo virginum
Mater purissima
Mater castissima

Ora pro nobis!

"Good," said Father Francis. "Go on."
The boy continued:—

Regina Angelorum
Regina Apostolorum
Regina Confessorum
Janua Cœli

Ora pro nobis!

"That is my good boy!" said the Father, approvingly, "never forget the Blessed Mother in your prayers. Now can you say your Stabat?"

The boy repeated in a sweet musical voice, after the soft Italian accents of the Jesuit:—

Stabat Mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrymosa
Dum pendebat Fil—

"POISON!" cried a voice behind them. It was the Doctor, who had been an unsuspected witness of the scene. "And thus you keep your promise, Father?"

"Achille," said Father Francis, rising, and majestically lifting his hand in the direction of the ceiling, "my duty to the Church is before my duty even to my friend—this absolves me."

"Bah!" said the Doctor, "I thought as much." Then turning to Reginald and patting his head, he said, "You, sir, shall go to school—to Dominic Strongi'th'arm's; there, I dare wager, you'll hear little enough of the Virgin Mother."

About a month afterwards, one morning when breakfast was over, the Doctor called Regy to him, and bade him get his hat.

"We are going to see Dominic Strongi'th'arm, my boy," he said.

Reginald jumped for joy. "I want so to go to school," he cried, and putting his little hand with child-like confidence into the doctor's, he trotted off by the side of the Good Uncle in search of Mr. James Strongi'th'arm's academy for young gentlemen.

BOSS.

FROM the humble performance exhibited in a dingy tent, at a country fair up to the grand "Circus of the Empress," in the Elysian Fields of Paris, are many shades and tones of the "horse-riding" business. The old grey wheezy steed—sole stock in trade—who toils round in an asthmatic canter, and who has beside to drag the cart from village to village—is at the bottom of the scale; his "company" a decayed old clown, with a faded elderly woman who stands on a wooden dumb waiter covered with a tablecloth laid on the poor old horse's back, and is dubbed "Mdle. Peri, the Fascinating Horsewoman," with a little girl in spangles. Very different this from the "Mammoth Company" a hundred strong, with its thirty or forty horses, its flaming and gilded cars—its bare-backed riders—"dazzling women," half dozen clowns and "comiques"—its strong men, agile men, twisting men, somersault throwers, knife swallowers, weight carriers, and its wealth of posters which are absolutely "scenes" in themselves, and anticipate

the pleasures of the night. It is inspiring to read the several lines—for self-praise in the horse-riding line is almost a moral precept, and modesty wholly out of place.

Troops of Lovely Women!
 Bold and Daring Riders!!
 Highly Trained Barbs!
 Side-splitting Comiques!!
 Sumptuous Appointments!!!

Though the thing has expanded with the age, there is a conservatism in the whole; the traditions are maintained. It is notorious how the attempt, directed by all that money and cleverness could do, to convert old Astley's into a theatre, was a miserable failure. It is Astley's once again. It has a hold on the human heart—has this horse-riding business. We see it again and again with an interest unimpaired by repetition. From that period, known in songs as "boyhood's hour," when we were taken during the holidays; into youth, when we took our pretty cousins; into manhood, when we took our little girls; and on to old age, when we were, alas! once more taken ourselves, the spectacle never once palls. We see the "act"—that going through hoops of paper and over scarves, the sawdust, the jokes with the riding master—the very aroma of the place—these will always hold us bound. As Sir Walter said of the "Vicar of Wakefield," we see it in youth, and in age—and bless the authors of a spectacle which can so well reconcile us to human nature.

One is even more inclined to be thus reconciled after seeing "Boss"—a view I confess scarcely shared by some *entrepreneurs*, or agents of the profession, sitting immediately behind. They affected to depreciate his performance as unworthy of a calling illustrious through a long line of distinguished artists, and predicted it would not last—meaning the element of attraction or "taking money." But this view was coloured by envy. It must be owned, too, that there was a corresponding air in the cluster of gentry in white waistcoats and braided trousers, who it must be owned are to be admired for the air of interest and amusement which they can assume at each part of the show, as though they were now seeing it for the first time—though the truth may be that there may be no acting in the case, and that repetition does not cause this exquisite enjoyment to pall. But these gentry had certainly only a half-satisfied air, something of amusement, pity and contempt combined. They seemed relieved when it was over, and got ready for the next act with unaccustomed alacrity.

Boss's horse had something in keeping with his rider—a short, cob-like creature, with more than the usual share of grotesque expression about the nose always to be noted in circus animals. We may be sure he felt degraded before his fellows in being put to such a use; much as menials of good connection would at being put to carry up the coal scuttle. His friends of the stable were no doubt shy of him and felt he was compromising their order.

When Boss himself makes his appearance, in a star-spangled equestrian suit, led by the hand into the arena, to make his bow, we are all delighted. He is not the usual mischievous "jacko"—with a blue or pale pink face, or even an old man's face, but has a dark snout, of a grave solemnity, which, shaded by his hat, imparts a more grotesque aspect.

Brought to his horse—just as the young ladies are gracefully led by the riding master—Boss puts his foot out to get "a leg up"—and placed on the back of the steed, the music strikes up, and he goes off at an easy canter. We like his *aplomb*, his air of perfect security—and the view of his back is strangely like that sort of stooping air, which a jockey affects when he is riding "hands down." He leaps and stands, bending himself to the motion of his steed, as his human fellow performers do—the steady, firm, jog-trot is truly equestrian. He then, following precedent, leaps round with his face to his horse's tail; then dances from one leg to the other, as the young equestrians in spangles and gauze, with French christian names, invariably do. He leaps forward and backwards, over his hat, in the level portions of his performance. Then he coolly raises his dark snout, and surveys the house with a half curious—half mournful face, which to the unconcerned bystander is almost ludicrous. Only the groundlings can laugh noisily; those gifted with more delicacy smile to themselves, and this with pity, at this creature thus forced—but without cruelty—into this strange and, to it, unnatural, sphere. His leaping over flags, is after the usual pattern, but attended with more certainty than in the case of our professionals. He knows he can do it, and has no affectation as they have, who make spurious offers and sham failures, in order to extort an ill-gotten sympathy. His gymnastic friends—"bodily contortionists" and the like, it will be noted, invariably fail, at the first or second offer, to turn over or alight standing on each others' shoulders. Certainly it would fill a philosopher with wonder, should he stray in here, rub his eyes hard,

and see before him a large amphitheatre crowded to the roof, with rings upon rings of human faces and human eyes—with heavy rent, and rates to be paid—gigantic bills—panoramas almost of colour, to be posted all over the metropolis—a small regiment of gentlemen in blue coats and gold braided trousers, and all gazing—all salaried to gaze—on a little monkey, seated on the back of a mottled horse. He might well be aghast, as the roar of applause bursts forth when this poor “quadrumane,” so he is styled on the posters—goes through his antics; though, indeed, the philosopher might go further, and wonder at the same crowd, gazing in delight at a lady in gauze bursting a hole in a paper screen.

Boss, also—like his brother professionals—requires breathing time, and sits and pants on his steed, at one side, after a spell of praiseworthy exertion. But it is to be noticed that the “fellow of infinite mirth”—the Shakspearean jester, abstains, during this interval, from beguiling, as his wont is, the audience to side splitting merriment. He owes it to his dignity not to play deputy to a brute. So we miss his “chaste quips,” which may sometimes hover on the edge of the smooth lawn of modesty.

Now the music goes off again, and with it the mottled cob; while gold-striped men hold out paper hoops. We may wonder what is in his monkey's soul as he finds his steed bounding beneath him, and feels the glare, and hears the roar of clapping mingled with laughter. Who *can* he think himself to be! And, at times, the black snout is turned upwards, with an inquiring, searching look, as who should ask, “Is this an apish pandemonium, or am I a mad monkey?” He plunges through the paper hoops, and at one point only “misses his tip,” and comes to the ground—but in a second has scrambled up nimbly by the tail of his horse, as though it were the trunk of a tree—perhaps the most comic incident of the whole, from the placid tolerance of the horse, not at all resenting his mode of ascent.

Best of all is the introduction of the little monkey whom Boss takes up before him, exactly as the stalwart bare-backed rider does “his youthful Fernando;” and after whose fashion to a nicety, Boss straddles out his legs to get balance, then hoists *his* young Fernando on his shoulders—stoops inwards in a centrifugal way, and goes round triumphantly. Then, being pretty tired, he bounds with much relief into the saw-dust, picks up a bouquet flung to him from what courtesy makes us ac-

cept as a disinterested quarter and retires with more good-will and interest than any of his “barebacked,” friends—rather, who ride what is barebacked—take with them. He withdraws to warm quarters, and to the society of a circle of monkey friends specially retained to keep him company and keep up his spirits. It is pleasant to think that this amusing exhibition is not purchased for us by cruel discipline, or by terrors of any sort—such as is too evident in the case of the poor ape seen at street corners, performing for an Italian master on a sort of tall camp-stool. Though this poor ape sweeps his crossings in a sort of frantic way, and fires guns, and plays the fiddle, it is to be seen by his cowering jerks how much the lash has had to do with his education. With M. Olivier's charge, kindness is said to be the sole agent—found to be more effective in its results than cruelty. The friends of animals can find little to object to in this treatment or exhibition; for such indirectly produces a kindly feeling; an interest in, and respect for, these quaint and grotesque creatures. Indeed, the brute creation is “looking up” as it is called, for they have actually their own “organ”—not physical, nor yet musical, which to the monkey kind must be odious—but a weekly journal. *The Animal World*, well edited, well illustrated, and enlightened by the kindly soul of Mary Howitt, well deserves a welcome and support. If one thing were possible it would be complete: namely, that constant readers, in the shape of suffering horses and persecuted asses, could write a letter to the paper, expressing their own particular hardships.

AN UNDERGRADUATE'S STORY.

CHAPTER VII.

MABEL discovered in the *escritoire*, besides the miniature portrait of herself, a number of crosses and other decorations which nothing could ever induce Sir Jasper to drag from their retreat. Upon these various tokens of her husband's valour and prowess she continued to gaze until her attention was attracted by a hastily folded and blotted paper which a trembling hand had thrust unfinished into a drawer of the desk, and whose sole superscription was—“For Mabel, when I am gone.”

The heart of the one thus addressed smote her as she reflected on the two long years and more which had been suffered to elapse with-

out those precious injunctions meeting her eye; even did they contain but a few words of invaluable parting tenderness, it had been a grievous loss thus long to requite them with oblivion. The letter ran thus :—

“MY DARLING MABEL,—When you read this—I could almost hope it may not be (I will not say) when you have ceased to love and regret the writer, for that I fondly believe to be impossible—it will be when the memory of our few short happy years has left that touch of subdued, nay filial, sorrow and trustfulness which will incline you to listen less impatiently to counsels from beyond the grave. We have, indeed, been very, very happy ! I, beyond any vision I ever cherished of felicity on this side of that grave on whose brink I hover; you, I trust, may feel as happy as the tenderest solicitude of one old enough to be your father, could make the willing sharer of an old man's dream.

“Thanks to you, my Mabel, I can echo the German girl's song of gratitude, and say with Thekla, “I have lived and loved.” Earth had no more to give me, except, perhaps, had it been permitted, the launch in life of my boy: and it is of him I would henceforth speak and think.

“Of your tender devotion to him when I am gone I will not be so idle as to hint at a possible diminution, be your future what it may, happy as I could wish and picture it. No ! it is your excess of watchful tenderness which I would rather guard against—not vulgar, commonplace indulgence, the fruit of indolence or weakness, and this my Mabel has too much of strength and principle, ay, and of true love for her child, to give way to. But while I would have my boy come to his mother for his innocent pleasures and with his infant sorrows, ay, and his maturer troubles, as the best of comforters and advisers, I own I covet for him the wholesome discipline of early obedience to a firmer rule than mothers can often establish, and to which, under Providence, I owe such success and self-reliance as has made my career in life what it has been. I never knew a mother's fostering care. An early orphan, I entered the army at an age when other boys are leaving their preparatory form. And though I would not forfeit, were it now possible, by such premature enrolment, the educational advantages for my child I had to seek in desultory after-study for myself, still I should wish, by an early start in boyhood's race, to accelerate the fitness of the future soldier to enter on his country's service.

“Strong as my feelings on the subject are (I have seen splendid natures shipwrecked in my time for want of a pilot at the helm), I shrink from the want of confidence in my noble wife, implied in imposing on her a joint guardian. Our two worthy co-trustees, though shrewd and friendly, are not the men I should select for the office. One, a thorough soldier and gentleman, belongs, as 'both, to a school perhaps gone by; the other, a man of the world and of business, would ignore the classics, from their supposed want of practical utility. One man I know, who, to a scholar's refinement and cultivation, joins the ablest practical talent, and unless my judgment is at fault, the most high-minded principle. Him I should like to associate in the rearing of my boy, if you, my Mabel, will consent, or at least, not refuse, to second me, should circumstances ever put it in your power to do so.

“I will not startle you more than I can help, my darling, by naming one of whom I know you once thought highly—of whom I ever did so, and ever shall, and who has a kinsman's right to an interest in my orphan boy.

“In agitating you, my treasure, I have upset myself. I could but let you know you had my sanction and my blessing, if a good man's happiness should ever rest upon your fiat. God bless and guide you, prays the one you have thus blessed already,

“JASPER OSBORNE.”

How strange, and indeed startling, did this rare effort of self-forgetfulness—amid solicitudes the most tender and touching for others' welfare and happiness—seem to her, whom blinding tears scarce permitted to decipher its faltering characters ! That Cecil Cunliffe—for the name stood out distinct to the mind's eye, as though visibly traced on the paper—ever cherished even a relic of a boyish predilection which, carefully disguised from himself under the mask of friendship even a girl's penetration had sufficed to detect, had long since occurred to Mabel, during their occasional meetings after her marriage. Nor—such had been his self-control—would the slightest indication of it probably ever, under more protracted intercourse, have been visible on the surface. The only token to Mabel, on looking back to that period of engrossing domestic happiness, of her having, even transiently, admitted the suspicion, was her unquestioning acquiescence in the cessation of Cecil's visits, notwithstanding the vexation it occasioned to his partial kinsman, and her

wanted anxiety to forward Sir Jasper's slightest wishes. "I must have felt at the time that it would not be good for him to come often ; for it was very pleasant to talk of old times, and Lionel loved him !"

CHAPTER VIII.

CECIL, meantime, once more thwarted in his half-formed project of throwing himself and his hopes and fears—the long cherished and long suppressed passion of a life-time—at the feet of its object, by even the knowledge, which he supposed confined to his own breast, of her peculiar and dependent position—found himself suddenly forced upon the desperate course, by discovering that the carefully guarded secret of the tenure of the Hollies, might, at any moment, be revealed to Mabel ; and raise up a barrier, probably more insuperable than ever, between them, while frustrating at the same time all his chivalrous designs on her behalf.

A paragraph, headed "Curiosities of Legal Experience," met his eye in a weekly paper, in which, with slight disguise from stars and dashes, the ejection, by the discovery of a male heir, from the estate of her ancestors of the widow of a late distinguished officer was coupled with the singular coincidence of a second flaw to her succession to her husband's property, by which, but for the chivalrous forbearance of the next of kin (himself), she would have been irretrievably ruined.

By whom this obnoxious paragraph had been inserted, and for what purpose, Cecil could not conjecture. The journal in question was, luckily, too obscure to reach its subject. But to anticipate the probability of its transfer to pages more likely to meet her eye, his proposal must be no longer one moment deferred. Anxiety for his own fate was now nearly merged in dread of the effects of wounded pride or feeling on hers ; and if under these powerful stimulants, Cecil felt it was no time for weighing words, he owed to them, at least, the eloquence which springs from having matters of life and death at stake.

With the ominous words (repeated to him on the occasion of the American's proposal by Colonel Vandaleur) as uttered by Lady Osborne ringing in his ears, "Were my son a beggar, I could stoop to no compromise," he sat down and wrote :—

"If anything can excuse, in the eyes of her, who, as Mabel Dorrian, unconsciously won, and ever since irrevocably has fixed, the lifelong devotion of one, whose presumption at

length hurries him (not without adequate motives) to her feet, it may perhaps be that strong sense of conscious unworthiness which first smothered, and long strove to extinguish, a boyish flame—the silent effort by which, for nine-long years, the smouldering embers have been studiously stifled ; and last, not least, that overwhelming pressure of circumstances which has at length converted farther dissimulation into a crime.

"If, having loved, and been beloved by her lost father and brother—if, having loved and revered, and been, he fondly hopes, esteemed by him, to whom it was no shame to yield a no longer coveted treasure—if a son's devotion to his memory, and a father's affection for his surviving boy, can form any passport to favour in the eyes of Lady Osborne—may they atone for the boldness, and procure the forgiveness of

"CECIL CUNLIFFE?"

This letter reached Mabel at the moment, perhaps, the most propitious that could have been devised for its reception ; while this testimony to his merits, nay, the sanction and blessing on his suit of her beloved husband was yet fresh on her eyes and heart. It woke there a responsive chord, long silenced amid nearer and dearer harmonies. And thus far even the faithful wife could admit to herself, that, if Mabel Dorrian was the first love of Cecil Cunliffe, his image, till displaced by a loftier idol, had vaguely haunted his girlish companion's fancy. And now, in maturer life, and with the most unimpeachable of tributes before her to his worth and character, what right-hearted woman but must be gratified by, and grateful for, the silent devotion of a man's best years of life ? To reject, or even trifle with, such genuine fidelity, was foreign to Mabel's generous nature. Fortified by her husband's sanction, touched to the heart by Cecil's manly eloquence—clinging instinctively to his invaluable friendship for her boy—she wrote at once :—

"If Mabel Dorrian—altered, aged, faded—can still retain the boyish predilection of Cecil Cunliffe, he may come and satisfy himself of the change which years and events have made in one, whom no length of years, or course of events, could ever prevent from viewing him as her own and her father's valued friend."

It was not, perhaps, from Mabel that Cecil had his warmest welcome to the Hollies. Felix, established on his knee, before he had

been half an hour in the house, looked up in his face, and said with childish glee—"You've come to stay this time! I told you mamma would like it, and so does Felix!" It was not from the Hollies, however, but from the roof of her paternal friend, Colonel Vandaleur, who, for once, looked approvingly on a ceremony he had in his own person successfully eschewed, and who gave away his friend's widow without a misgiving to the man of her husband's choice—that Cecil obtained that object of his ten years' silent devotion, whom considerations connected with herself would alone, perhaps, have ever stimulated him to claim. To this solicitude for the dignity of her he loved, to that "pride for Mabel" which had interfered with his asking her, when seeming less richly endowed than before, may be referred his unselfish joy, when, on hearing of her intended marriage—the Georgian (summoned hastily from England by the unhappy events threatening the "South" of his early predilections) handed over, as a sacred but newly discovered debt, the £15,000 balance of the portion which, had her brother lived to succeed, had been secured to her on the estate.

"Now," thought he, "if ill-luck ever reveals to her that the Hollies was not hers to bring" (though indeed neither that nor the later addition had he ever suffered to pass for a moment from her own special and absolute possession), "she cannot say or feel that she came to me without a dowry suitable to her birth and station! She has stooped enough even without that in becoming a hard-working lawyer's wife!"

Not thus, however, did Mabel Osborne view the union of her fortunes with those of one of the most esteemed members of his profession.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, with brief snatches of vacation at the Hollies—over which retreat its connection with other times and ties only shed a tinge of hallowed satisfaction, in counsels listened to and wishes realised—the barrister's home was not the less the seat of domestic happiness, for combining, to little Felix, the public school education of his late father's aspirations with the snug home of a fond mother's preference for one as yet so very young.

And when compensation—had any such in Cecil's society been wanting—might have seemed needed, on her first-born's transfer to a more distant and special military school,—two rosy little brothers had come to recall,

rather than rival, with both parents, their elder boy.

The sole and heartfelt drawback on their wedded happiness has of late arisen from hearing of the death, on the battle-field of his distracted country, of the gallant Georgian—a shock, it may be believed, not mitigated by the generous fellow's execution, before quitting England, of a will in his young cousin's favour, and to which not even the dear old Hall, thus sadly re-acquired, will for long avail to reconcile its former possessor.

"Had you, on hearing of his claims, defied your American cousin," said Cecil, thoughtfully, to his wife, when the news came, "how different would have been now your feelings, perhaps even your son's uncertain or disputed title! And had love for him beguiled you into the tempting compromise, once more a sorrowing widow, you would not have now been sitting by your faithful Cecil's side."

LOST EROS.

I KNOW it fell in spring—in spring,
Of old, my feet went wandering
In a garden ground;
And in the sunniest spot of all,
Beside a blossom'd orchard wall,
A shady arbour found.

I look'd within: the loveliest face
Smiled 'mid the silence of the place,
Of a golden boy.
His eyes were wonderful to see;
His shoulders were as ivory;
His lips but little coy.

He said, and smiled—his words were still
And sweet—"If you have but the will,
Rest beside me, here.
To clasp me close, and kiss these eyes
Is as the bliss of Paradise.
None listens: none is near."

I said, "I know you, Love: I know
The snares you weave for those who go
Idlers in the land."
I cried, "Away! Love, bind not me!"
Turn'd, as a vessel holds to sea,
When near a Siren strand.

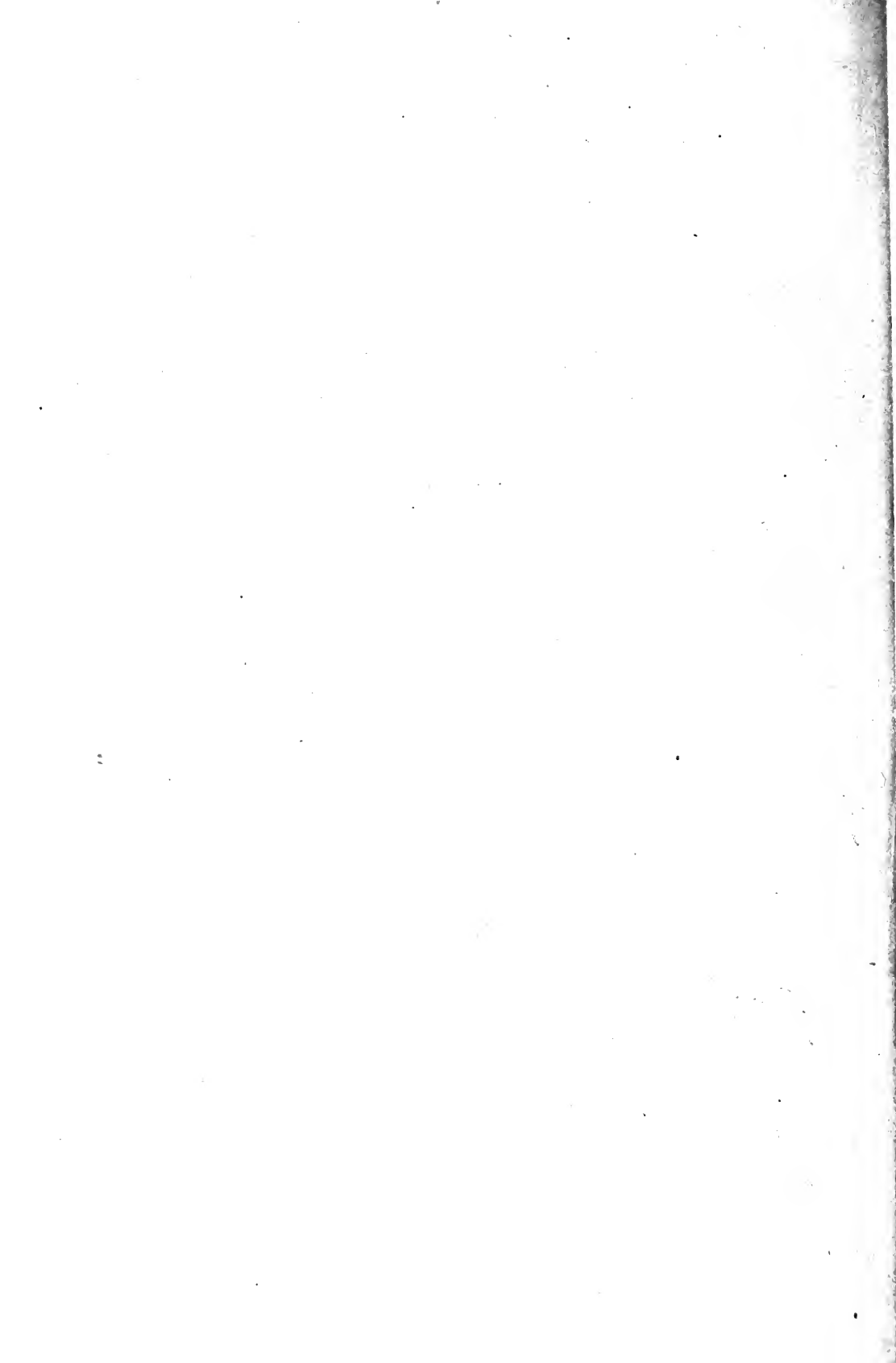
Now gleams his face in dreams: I pass
Along the wither'd dewless grass,
And in vain I sigh
To find him, touch him, cling to him;
To kiss him, till my eyes grow dim;
To clasp him till I die.



Once a Week.]

[February 12, 1870.

“‘POISON!’ cried a voice behind them.” (Page 29.)



CAUGHT BY A THREAD.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

CHAPTER V.

MR. CLARE had thought long and anxiously over Mary's refusal to discontinue the correspondence of which he so much disapproved, and the result was, that he decided upon giving Mrs. Graves-Parr an invitation to spend a month at the rectory, in order that she might have frequent opportunities of remonstrating with Mary on the folly of her conduct. Accordingly the rector's cousin came to stay with the Clare family on the day following that on which Mary was informed by her father of Mr. Bentley Wyvern's proposal. Mrs. Graves-Parr was strongly in favour of the marriage, chiefly because Bentley Wyvern had shown so marked a desire to cultivate her friendship, that she had no doubt of her always being a welcome guest at his house in the event of the union taking place. Her first proceeding, after a long conversation with the rector, had been to examine the letter-bag just before post time. In it she had found a note addressed to Fenwick, which she not only intercepted but secretly destroyed. Mr. Clare had merely authorised her to send back any letters directed in Fenwick's handwriting, but it occurred to her that by following her own plan a misunderstanding between the lovers might be promoted, which, for a time at least, would prevent any attempt to renew the correspondence. With the same object she took charge of the letters which came from Fenwick, intending to retain them for some weeks, and then return them unopened to the writer. It was she, too, who had stated to Dr. Craven that Mary would, ere long, become the wife of Bentley Wyvern, trusting that Fenwick would hear this report from the doctor, and receive it as a sufficient explanation of his letters remaining unanswered. When nearly a fortnight had elapsed without Mary having heard from Fenwick, she entertained no doubt that her father had carried his avowed intention into effect. She experienced some trifling consolation in the reflection that, at any rate, she could not be accused of endeavouring to continue the correspondence by clandestine means, yet she felt so deeply the increasing coldness displayed by her father, that she was almost disposed to give him the promise which he required. Mary feared, however, that such a concession might lead to the supposition that she was less firm in her attachment to Fenwick,

and so encourage a hope that Bentley Wyvern's suit might prove successful, if urged with sufficient perseverance.

Meanwhile Fenwick, a prey to the greatest despondency, was vainly endeavouring to account for his last letter, like the two former ones, remaining unanswered. He would have gone to Upfield and sought an interview with Mary in order to learn the worst, had not his pride revolted at such a course, when he recollected that he had given a pledge not to enter the rectory until he came to demand her for his wife. He was sitting in his little room one evening with a book before him, upon which he had made several futile attempts to fix his attention, when Bridget, with her apparel rather more dilapidated than usual, ushered in Mr. Bentley Wyvern.

"You are, no doubt, surprised, Mr. Towers, to receive a visit from me," he said, blandly. "I have called once or twice without being fortunate enough to find you at home."

"It would have saved you some trouble had you communicated with me by letter," remarked Fenwick, coldly, as he rose from his chair.

"Do you think so? Well, perhaps you're right. When you hear what I have to say you will be better able to judge as to the necessity for a personal interview. You were introduced to me by Dr. Craven, a man for whom I entertain the highest esteem, and whom I am anxious to oblige as far as possible. No doubt you remember that he obtained a promise from me to render you my assistance in obtaining some employment for you. I am now able to offer you a lucrative appointment, and one that promises to become still more so in a very few years."

"At whose suggestion do you make this proposal?" asked Fenwick, with a sudden misgiving that it proceeded from other motives than a desire to oblige the doctor.

"At whose suggestion!" echoed Bentley Wyvern, in a tone of surprise. "I imagined that I had already explained the reason which induces me to feel some interest in you. Allow me, however, to remind you that when a man offers to render you a service, it is by no means becoming to put such a question as that."

"Under ordinary circumstances there may be some truth in what you say."

"Clearly so," went on Bentley Wyvern, without appearing fully to understand Fenwick's meaning. "The Leviathan company has an office in Melbourne, and as the manager of it is about to return to this country to take the place made vacant by a very lamentable

occurrence at Lombard Street, I can secure your appointment as his successor. The salary is five hundred a year and——"

"I decline to accept your offer," said Fenwick, abruptly.

"Indeed! May I ask why?"

"Because I am unwilling to place myself under any obligation to you."

"But you have done so already," rejoined Bentley Wyvern, with an unmistakable sneer. "What has occurred to cause this change in your feelings?"

"I think we had better not pursue the subject further."

"But I insist upon having an explanation. Haven't you forgiven me for alluding to the rumour that you were in love with Miss Mary Clare? If you still entertain any hopes of becoming her husband, let me advise you to abandon them, unless, indeed, you are willing to lose your peace of mind."

"Is it your anxiety to secure my peace of mind which induces you to recommend me to go to Australia?" inquired Fenwick, sarcastically.

"No doubt that's an additional reason why you should accept my offer," replied Bentley Wyvern, coolly. "But I have not made it solely on that account. However, as you decline it, remain at home, and try what effect that will have. It is not unlikely that before many weeks elapse you will hear of a wedding having taken place at Upfield in which you will feel considerable interest."

"Whose wedding do you allude to?"

"Ah! I shall leave you to guess that," answered Bentley Wyvern, with a very disagreeable smile.

At this moment, Mr. Hurlston knocked at the half-closed door, and looked into the room.

"Oh! I see you have a friend with you," he said, pausing on the threshold.

"You are mistaken," observed Fenwick. "This gentleman is hardly even an acquaintance, though I must confess that he feels as much inclined to interfere in my private affairs, as if I were on terms of the greatest intimacy with him."

"Come in, sir; come in," said Bentley Wyvern, with undiminished assurance. "My object in calling upon Mr. Towers was to render him a service."

Mr. Hurlston entered the room holding in his hand a large folded paper. He peered at Bentley Wyvern for a moment, and then turned towards Fenwick, as he said, bluntly:—

"Your visitor doesn't look like a man who

would be anxious to do people a service from pure benevolence."

"My good sir," retorted Bentley Wyvern, "I am afraid that age has very much blunted your perceptions."

"Say, rather, that my lengthened experience of the world has rendered them the more keen."

"No. I prefer adhering to what I have said," returned Bentley Wyvern. By-the-by, Mr. Towers, before I take my leave, let me mention that the attorneys engaged in Sir Charles Pennington's case have expressed a desire to see you, and will probably write to you on the subject to-morrow."

He bowed slightly to Fenwick, and left the room.

"Now, what has that fellow been saying to you?" asked Mr. Hurlston. "Of course, if he has been talking of subjects that you prefer not to repeat I don't wish you to answer my question."

Fenwick hesitated for a moment, and then frankly explained his position with regard to Mary Clare, as well as detailed his conversation with Bentley Wyvern.

"And this man, who is trying to supplant you in the girl's affections, is he wealthy?" inquired the old man.

"I suppose he has a good deal of money, otherwise Mr. Clare would not encourage him to propose for her."

"The fellow is an infernal cad, unless I am much mistaken," said Mr. Hurlston.

"You don't seem to be favourably impressed with Mr. Wyvern."

"Favourably impressed!" said Mr. Hurlston, in a contemptuous tone. "Why, the man's face is one of the most unprepossessing I ever saw. Low cunning—low cunning in every line of it."

He walked to the fire and stood with his back to it, looking thoughtfully at the paper which he held in his hand.

"Are you certain that she loves you?" he asked, after some minutes' silence.

"Mary? Oh, yes, I cannot doubt that."

"Then there is no danger of her being persuaded to marry the man who has just left us."

"I don't suppose there is, but I cannot help feeling very anxious to learn the cause of my letters remaining unanswered."

"I shall probably leave here in the course of next week," said Mr. Hurlston, after another pause, "but I shall discharge my debt to you ere then. To-day I entered into an agreement for the sale of a part of my property, which I

have already told you consists entirely of land in Australia."

"Will you pardon me if I ask how it is that you appear to be deriving no income from your estates?"

"Because they consist in land at Port Adelaide, which I obtained from the Crown about forty years ago. Nearly the whole of this land is completely unproductive, but for a certain purpose it is of immense value. Some time ago the local government ordered a survey, and proposed to convert it into docks and wharves, in which the colony is deplorably deficient. The intention was not, however carried out, otherwise I should have received a million of money for a moiety of the property."

Fenwick smiled incredulously.

"Since my return to this country, I have brought the subject to the notice of several large capitalists," continued Mr. Hurlston, "and at length a joint-stock company has been formed, with the object I have mentioned. The undertaking will, however, be carried out upon a much smaller scale than I was led to expect; added to which, my desire to benefit the people of the colony has induced me to sacrifice a large sum. In fact, the whole capital of the company is only half a million."

"But have you really settled the matter beyond a doubt?" asked Fenwick, opening his eyes to their fullest extent.

Mr. Hurlston slowly unfolded the paper which he had brought into the room with him, and handed to Fenwick the draft of an agreement.

"A sum of twenty-five thousand pounds to be paid to you as the first instalment!" he exclaimed, looking over it.

"Yes. It's not much; but it is more than sufficient for my present wants," said Mr. Hurlston.

"I sincerely congratulate you."

"Allow me, in return, to congratulate *you*," said the old man, in a milder tone than usual.

"I wish there were some grounds for doing so."

"There are."

"Then I should be glad to hear you particularize them, for I feel somewhat despondent at the present moment."

"In that case I shall defer explaining myself. It will be a very proper punishment for allowing such a feeling to take possession of you at your age. Look at me, sir, more than half a century your senior. Have you ever found me wanting in cheerfulness?"

"And how long do you intend to keep

me in suspense?" said Fenwick, smiling faintly.

"Perhaps you think I am merely joking. I assure you that I am perfectly serious in all I have said. You are to be congratulated, and I intend to tell you why, but not just now. By-the-by, have you any other Christian name besides Fenwick?"

"No."

"I thought not."

"Does that fact incline you to believe that my prospective happiness is secured?" asked Fenwick, laughing.

"Upon reflection I think it better not to say anything more on the subject till my arrangements for removing to Claridge's are completed; and as I feel a good deal fatigued with the business I have been engaged in to-day, it's my intention to retire to bed at once."

The old man waved his hand to Fenwick, and descended to the drawing-room.

THE CRUSADE OF CHILDREN.

THIS almost incredible episode of the middle ages has been treated as an entire fabrication. The alleged facts, however, strange as they are, are now proved to be entirely true. In two different countries, somewhere about the same time, a similar religious excitement prevailed among the children, and led to similar results. Let us briefly relate the story. It happened about the year 1212. Philip Augustus was king of France, and it was a great time for religion. The unity of the faith was maintained successfully by two crusades in the South of France. In these the most civilized, the most artistic, the most religious people in the world, were massacred by thousands—"burnt with an infinite joy," as the chroniclers tell us; the light-hearted literature of Provence was suddenly and entirely stopped, much as if a line had been drawn across it: and the progress of reform checked for another three hundred years. The Jews, as generally happened when people thought that some concessions were due to religion, were driven out of the country—one wonders where these unfortunates ever found refuge. Proceedings were taken against blasphemers, due distinction of rank being held as to penalties; for the rich man could blaspheme freely at the rate of twenty nobles an oath, while the poor man, most properly, was thrown into the nearest river for exactly the same offence. Excommunications flew about like cannon shot, no king being altogether safe.

And not only in France, but in all other countries the interests of the church got looked after, about these years, in a way that may have comforted the spirit, but could hardly have been otherwise than annoying to the flesh. Richard had had a good many valiant Englishmen killed in Palestine; a great deal of fighting had been done there, too, by King Guy de Lusignan; there was a Pope who would stand no manner of nonsense; and an emperor in Germany with a will of his own, styled Frederick with the Red Beard—the same old man who now sits in a cavern, his beard growing through a stone table, and bides his time. He will return with King Arthur. Add to these a crafty and sagacious old Doge, who, seeing that the best interests of Holy Church and religion demanded the supremacy of Venice, directed the crusade, of which Villehardouin gives us the history, to the taking of Constantinople.

The crusades had been, so far as fighting went, brilliant enough, but produced, after all, singularly small results. Frederick was drowned. Richard performed prodigies, and came home again. Philip grew sulky and came home. And Christendom was in despair. Only the small gleam of sunshine produced by the ruins of Provence to cheer it! And it was in this period of gloom, that a German preacher, Nicolas by name, was instigated by the devil to preach a crusade of children.

The arms of great kings; the valour of sturdy soldiers; the craft of cunning captains; all the wealth and treasures of Western Europe; the pride, the pomp, the strength of man, all these had been expended on the conquest of the Holy Land, and had failed. The failure was disastrous and complete. And it seemed as though a decree had gone forth that human strength should not be able to drive the infidel from his seat. Brooding over these things, a fanatic monk might well drift into a conviction, soon to become too strong for repression, that what the arms of the mighty could not effect, should be accomplished by those of babes and innocents. This would not be at all extraordinary. The extraordinary thing is that, being himself so persuaded, he was able to persuade the children, to fill their hearts with a confidence that nothing could shatter, and to march them off by thousands to the invasion of Palestine.

Where they came from; by what means they all managed to assemble; how the army gathered day by day; what were the burning words of the preacher; is impossible to show. Their plans only are known; they were to

make straight for the Mediterranean—this sea was to be miraculously dried up to let them pass; on their arrival in the Holy Land the infidels would drop their arms and flee. This much they were assured of—for Nicolas promised it.

They assembled, somehow, and arrived, seven thousand strong, before Genoa. On the way they suffered great hardships; they lost many of their number from famine; many were kidnapped and sold into slavery; robbers, thieves, and bad characters of all sorts, had hovered round them, and even mixed in their ranks; and those who got safely to their post only arrived to find the sea that was to have been dried up, rolling its blue waves as usual.

There the history of the poor children of Germany comes to an end. Some, it is said, got back again, starving; some remained in Genoa, where their names, Italianised, are found still—Vivaldi, for instance. But many perished in the attempt to get home again. And we may figure to ourselves the contrast between the joyous setting out—or even the hard toil over the mountains, where, at least, hope cheered them—with the bitter home-returning, ragged, famished, and heart-sick. One wishes at least that we could hear tidings of Nicolas.

The children's crusade in France, more disastrous still in its results, had perhaps a somewhat different origin. One hopes that one is not uncharitable to two worthy men, and an advocate might perhaps make out some small case in their favour—something distantly resembling an argument—to prove that the promoters of this enterprise were perhaps more sinned against than sinning. But read the facts.

Among all the pleasant practices of this joyous time there was none that, to modern minds, provokes a more decided and unmistakable feeling than a practice prevalent at Marseilles and Venice, of kidnapping boys and sending them to the East, were they were esteemed above all other slaves, and were brought up with great care. Thus we find it mentioned of the "Old Man of the Mountain," that he liberated certain captive clerks on the condition that they should kidnap for him young Frank boys, to be brought up as his soldiers, the venerable chief having the strongest admiration of Frankish courage. And it seems to be a thing beyond all doubt that many merchants made large sums of money in this abominable traffic.

Two names, at least, have been handed down to the admiration of posterity. Hugues

Ferreus—Iron Hugh, and Guillaume Porcus—William the Pig, were residents at Marseilles, and, as is alleged, secret slave-dealers. Now, whether the movement, due altogether to Nicolas, spread from Germany, or whether it was promoted and fostered by these two for their own purpose, it is now impossible to say. One would incline to take the less base view of the matter, and to suppose that they simply saw their advantage and seized it. It would be too much villany not only to derive all the advantage from an outburst of enthusiastic faith, but also to have, in the first instance, awakened that faith. Men are not so far-seeing: the greatest villanies are accomplished by a happy sympathy with events, oftener than by efforts to originate them. To seize a combination of circumstances and mould it to your own advantage is itself sometimes an effort of so great genius that we need look for nothing more.

I prefer, then, to think that the innocent children in France were beguiled by the same tempting tongue that ruined their brothers and sisters in Germany. They were to conquer the sacred city: the guiltless hands of children were to accomplish what the stained hands of the men could not do. Like the Holy Grail, the city was not to be won by guilty hearts. The sins of violence, oppression, and lust of the Christian soldiers marred, men said, all chances of success. They were too wicked to succeed. What they won by valour they lost by sin. Let the children go. They flocked southward, not, it would seem, in such large numbers as those who camped outside Genoa; and they came to Marseilles, stopped by the sea that had not dried up to let them pass. And in this strait, as I understand the tale, William the Pig and Iron Hugh, seeing their opportunity, met them. If they could not get across on dry land, why not go in ships? The ships were then in the harbour, ready at hand for their service; and if the children had no money, they, too, the Pig and his friend, would willingly take them for nothing. It was a splendid stroke of business. They filled seven ships (one would like to know how many went in a ship) with these little crusaders; and they sailed out of port, singing countless hymns, no doubt, and waving their flags—a sight to move men's tears, even if they were going to certain victory—and they steered for the golden East.

The enterprising merchants were not entirely lucky. Somehow, in this world of disappointments, something always happens to mar the perfect success of a *coup*. Bad weather came

on; the ships separated, and it must have been with the most poignant grief that the partners witnessed the foundering, with all hands lost, of two of their precious ships. Perhaps the poor children on board had the best of it. They, at least, only suffered from the pang of disappointment. Death deprived them of the glory of their comrades; they would see the Heavenly Jerusalem, but never help to conquer the earthly city.

The storm, however, subsided, and five vessels had ridden out the gale. These arrived safely at Alexandria. The wolf of Red Riding Hood was a soft-hearted gentle creature, compared with William and Hugh. These, now that the sacred soil was almost reached, threw off the mask, and, landing the children, sold them every one, boys and girls, for slaves. They sold extremely well, prices ruling high. The Caliph himself purchased no less than forty, and laden with the spoils of their brilliant stroke of business the heads of the Marseilles firm left Alexandria. As for the children, intelligence slowly reached France of their fate. Some managed to get back; some were ransomed; most died there. The death of twelve, at least, was circumstantially recorded, for these died in cruel tortures, martyrs to the faith. The silence of oblivion falls over the rest of their story, and we know nothing more about them.

Thirty-six years later, Louis the Ninth set off on his first crusade. Perhaps among the soldiers who followed him were one or two who had embarked on those fatal ships at Marseilles.

There is, however, a ray of sunshine in the story.

Raro antecedentum scelestum
Deseruit pede pena claudo.

I do not know how many years later, but some time or other after this event the two worthy merchants, still in partnership, found themselves in Sicily. While there, they were accused of conspiracy against the king. One hopes, in order to heighten the retribution, that the accusation was false. The event of the trial, however, was fatal to them, and Iron Hugh, with William the Pig, met that fate which so often overtakes greatness. They died by hemp. The few facts which I have related alone remain in history to testify of their heroic temperament, and of a greatness of soul surpassing, as some of their admirers may conjecture, even that of Jonathan Wild. Imagination restores the vanished image of the two friends, and across the gulf of six

hundred years, their figures stand out clear and distinct. Actuated by one mind, they were undivided in life. Together they inveigled on their ships the innocent boys and girls; together they sold them into slavery; together, doubtless for the same wise and good end—the accumulation of wealth—they conspired against the powers that were; and together they swung from the fatal beam. Their very names are suggestive. The grim Puritanical spirit of Hugh, surnamed the Iron, to whom religion and life were stern things, would stand in strong light against the rollicking piety of his partner, the Pig, who knew how to make the best of both worlds, and was probably never serious save at mass or singing of anthems. Fat, comely, clean-shaven the one; lank-jawed, bearded, and thin, the other. And yet, for the spirit is stronger than the flesh, sinking their smaller differences, they were able to unite in the common object of that noblest form of philanthropy, to help themselves; to make a ladder, not, as Saint Augustin recommends, of their own vices, but of the follies of their fellow-creatures. "*Qui vult decipi*," the Iron one would say, "*decipiatur*."

TABLE TALK.

IN connection with the liberal policy suggested by the proposed abolition of Tests, the college authorities will do well to consider the propriety of continuing to enforce a reluctant but compulsory attendance at the college chapels upon all the students in residence. In large colleges it is at best a piece of their discipline serving the purpose of a roll-call in a regiment, whilst in small ones it has not even this advantage. In any case, compulsory "worship" can do nothing towards furthering the ends of true religion, or fostering a man's veneration and love for the services of mother Church. And in some instances, and these not a few, injustice is done to the conscientious scruples of the students. For a system that compels men who jump out of bed just as they hear the last sounds of the bell, half asleep and half dressed, to hear Morning Prayers said in the shortest possible time; or rushing in hot from "the boats," or cricket, or their country grind, to slip on a surplice and hasten into chapel just in time to "keep it" and save their fine and disgrace with the Dean—surely little can be said. Our own belief is, that were attendance at the chapels as voluntary a matter as going to the Univer-

sity Church on a Sunday, there would be a very good congregation of students at the several services. The men would go more readily from a feeling of duty and of deference to the wishes of the authorities, than they now do on compulsion. Something might be done to render the services more reverent in tone and manner than they are. The prayers are said and the lesson read far too rapidly. Their effect is marred—if not destroyed—by the pace at which they proceed. There used to be—we will not say at which university—a clergyman who was commonly known as Pontius Pilate. He had earned this *sobriquet*—we give the illustration with all reverence—by having frequently offered to give any other Dean or Reader in the place as far as "Pontius Pilate" in the Creed and then finish first. This was some years ago; but a good deal of the spirit still remains. Musical services have become common, and of course they cannot be hurried through; but their length is disliked; and at a very large and very distinguished college the popular Sunday service is a plain one, beginning at 3.15, which is called "the Express," because it is "all over in about twenty minutes." Now our argument amounts to this: services in the college chapels are religious services, and ought not to be mere matters of the day's routine. It is doubtless desirable that men at college should attend chapel; but the effect of making attendance compulsory fosters the desire to have it "over in about twenty minutes;" and we firmly believe that the application of a voluntary system would further the ends of true religion and active piety, so that under such a system the "3.15 Express" might after a while become the least popular service.

IN *Belgravia* for January, 1870, is an article called "The Missing Baronet," in which Mr. Walter Thornbury records the celebrated "Bristol case" of the abduction and murder of Sir John Dinely Goodere, by his brother, Captain Goodere, which led to a noted trial (March 26, 1741,) at Bristol, that is famous among English *causes célèbres*. Mr. Thornbury's article concludes thus:—"The celebrated humorist, Foote, was a relative of the murderer, and was once introduced to a party of wits as 'the young gentleman whose relative murdered his brother at Bristol!'" (p. 369.) As he has here mentioned Foote, Mr. Thornbury should have also mentioned a very remarkable circumstance in connection with the celebrated case of which he was writing. Sir John Dinely Goodere, it may be stated, was the

maternal uncle of Foote; and his abduction and murder happened soon after Foote's early marriage. On the night of the murder, Foote and his bride were spending a month at his father's house at Truro, in Cornwall. The date was January 18, 1741. After the young couple had retired to rest, they heard, underneath their bed-room window, a concert of music, which lasted for about twenty minutes. They thanked the elder Mr. Foote, in the morning, for his gallant attention in supplying them with a serenade; but he denied all knowledge of the circumstance: nor was the matter ever cleared up. So impressed, however, was Samuel Foote with the occurrence, that he wrote out particulars of it; and afterwards discovered that the mysterious serenade had happened at the very time of the murder of his maternal uncle. That there was any connection between the two events is another matter; but, Foote's ghostly serenaders should have had their place in Mr. Thornbury's story—especially as it was published at Christmas. In giving real names and authentic details, Mr. Thornbury has done far better than Mr. Sala did in the *Belgravia* Christmas number for the previous year. Mr. Sala there devoted thirteen pages to the narration of "the only ghost story which is true," which he smothered in his own fiction and called "The Bad Lord Brackenbury." Of course, it was a dressing-up of the celebrated "ghost-story" of Lord Lyttelton. This was Thomas, Lord Lyttelton, son of the first "great" Lord Lyttelton, who was born in 1744, was M.P. for Bewdley in 1768, and died in 1779, at Pit-place near Epsom. The ghost story, with the apparition of the injured lady, and the attempted "jockeying" of the ghost, by putting on the fingers of the clock for one hour, with all the other peculiar circumstances attending the death, are fully narrated in Wraxall's "Memoirs of his own Time," vol. i., p. 319.

WE ARE NOT SURPRISED that, at last, the sympathy of juries in actions against the railway companies for compensation for injuries inflicted is taking a decided turn. For a long time past, the prejudices of the "twelve honest men and true," have been always for the plaintiff; and the result has been that the shareholders have had to pay smartly for the mischiefs alleged to have been sustained. The companies' solicitors assert that in many instances their clients have been shamefully victimized through the bias of the juries, the exaggerated statements of the plaintiffs as to amount of injuries sustained, and by the

trumped up evidence of the witnesses called to support these allegations. The exposure, in several instances, in actions brought against the Brighton Company in connection with the New Cross accident has been complete; both plaintiffs and witnesses going down before the fire of a telling cross-examination. With this new light on the subject, it is, we believe, the intention of the companies to endeavour to get a bill through the House this session, giving them a special tribunal for all such cases; the principle of the proposed law is that all claims for damages shall, from the passing of such Act, be referred to arbitration, and not be left for a jury to assess. But surely the passing of such an enactment strikes a blow at what Sir William Blackstone styles "the grand bulwark of an Englishman's liberties, secured to him by the Great Charter," though his remark applies rather to Trial by Jury in criminal than in civil cases. We think any effort on the part of the railway companies to secure for their own protection and benefit a special tribunal, will meet with little sympathy in the House, and less out of it—except at the hands of the shareholders.

AFTER ALL the true solution of the difficulty for both sides appears to be the strict application of the "block system" and consequent immunity from accidents from collision at all events. "But," it is urged, "the block system can never be made effective; in a late accident involving thousands of pounds in payments for compensation and law costs, the driver of the train—an old servant of the company—ran past five or six signals all dead against him; and such is the effect of daily immunity upon the drivers, that they will not pay due attention to the signals on lines where the 'block system' is in force." The answer to this argument is simple enough:—the companies must make their servants conform to their regulations, or be willing to pay for loss of life and limb, caused by the recklessness of drivers who still go on, though "five or six signals are dead against them."

WITHOUT CONTROVERTING the wisdom of the adage concerning language concealing thoughts, I might safely aver that words often shroud meaning. What, for example, is a bouquet?—a word that may now be considered to be in ordinary English use. Is it a Covent Garden nosegay, to be held in the hand of a bride or ball-room belle, or flung on to the stage to the favoured prima donna? or is it that subtle odour which the connoisseur in

wine sniffs as though it were rich incense? or is it a grand discharge of rockets at a firework exhibition? It is this third and last sense that has probably given to the word bouquet its latest signification. It appears that "a bouquet at Sandringham" is a general sky-rocket burst of birds from the covert. The beaters drive the game into a strip of covert that leads into an open part of the wood, where the shooters are stationed; then, when the birds are driven to the very end of their shelter, they are compelled to rise in the air, and to run the gauntlet of the guns. Their sudden and simultaneous flight is called "the bouquet;" and the name is probably derived from the discharge of "a bouquet" of sky-rockets. The terrific effect upon Mr. Briggs' nerves when a single cock pheasant rose from under his very nose, was admirably depicted by Leech as being equivalent to the discharge of a huge firework. What then would be the effect of a hundred such birds rising at once from their sheltering covert in the fashion of a Sandringham bouquet? By the way, Mr. Walter Thornbury, in an article on "London Theatres and Actors" in *Belgravia*, for December, 1869, says, "here was a bouquet of talent!" (p. 250). Perhaps the theatrical application of the word bouquet was suggested to Mr. Thornbury by the poet Bunn's celebrated "blaze of triumph."

A CORRESPONDENT: "H—m—Walker" is so common and almost universal an expression of incredulity, both in England and the United States, that I have been at considerable pains to make out who and what manner of man this Walker was. Apparently *Hookey* was his Christian name; or, if we believe other accounts, it was a *sobriquet* earned for him by the peculiar bent of his nasal organ. In "Noted Names of Fiction," Mr. Wheeler says Hookey Walker was the popular name of an out-door clerk at Longman, Clementi & Co.'s, in Cheapside, London, where a great number of persons were employed. His real name was John Walker, and the epithet *Hookey* was given him on account of his long or crooked nose. He was employed as a spy upon the doings of the other workmen, and as it was their interest to throw discredit upon his assertions, Hookey's evidence was superseded, and he was constantly outvoted; so his occupation ceased, but not the fame of Hookey Walker. Mr. Wheeler gives two other accounts of him. He says that according to the *Saturday Review* the expression is derived from "an aquiline-nosed Jew named Walker, an out-

door astronomical lecturer, of some local notoriety in his day." Another account makes Hookey "a magistrate of dreaded acuteness and incredulity," who has given the title or epithet of "beak" to magistrates ever since. Here we have three different and conflicting accounts of the doubtless once famous and notorious Hookey Walker. Which is right—if either? Can any of your readers supply conclusive evidence of Mr. Walker's personality?

THREE OR FOUR SHOPS on the north side of Fleet Street, between Chancery Lane and Temple Bar—that have long been unoccupied, being part of the property purchased for the new Law Courts—were the other day pasted over with placards announcing that the "materials" of the said houses, were for sale by auction, as they were to be pulled down forthwith. A few days after, it was announced that the sale was postponed. Most people thought that the present intention of pulling down these houses was tantamount to the definite selection of the Carey Street site, and were disappointed to find that they are still to stand as a memento of the economic and æsthetic crotchets of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. While Mr. Lowe and Sir Roundell Palmer fight the battle of the sites, the public and the legal profession suffer; and the erection of a respectable Palace of Justice containing a sufficient number of light and well-ventilated law courts, is further and apparently indefinitely postponed.

THE REV. THOMAS L—T, incumbent of W—n, near Lichfield, related the following experience of a brother clergyman:—He had a parishioner, an old woman, who seldom went to church. Observing her there one Good Friday, frequently lifting up her eyes, opening her mouth, and wringing her hands, as he preached somewhat graphically upon the intensity of our Saviour's agony and death, he fancied he had made some impression upon the old woman's mind; and hoping to improve it, he asked her, after the service, what she thought of the sermon. "Sarmon, sir!" she replied. "How could you go fur to tell sich a story? Thank the Lord, it was a long time ago, and don't consarn us; so we'll hope it ain't true!"

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THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

CHAPTER IV.

DOMINIE STRONGI'TH'ARM'S ACADEMY.



LEFT Reginald Erle and the Doctor on their way to Mr. James Strongi'th'arm's.

Wending their way through the square, and past the old buildings of St. Bartholomew's School, they turned up Narrow Toe Lane, and so got into Marefair, so called, it is supposed, because

horses were believed to have been anciently sold there. At the end of this street was a doorway, displaying a great brass plate, with "Marefair Academy: Mr. Strongi'th'arm", upon it. This doorway led into a passage, and up the passage were two large, old-fashioned houses in very bad repair: the first was the Misses Odger's Establishment for Young Ladies, the other was Mr. Strongi'th'arm's Academy for Young Gentlemen. Walking past Miss Odger's front door and dining-room windows you found opposite you a green

door leading into a yard or playground, and to your right hand a door leading into Mr. Strongi'th'arm's house. Halting before this latter door, the Doctor pulled the bell, and poor little Reginald stood with a palpitating heart, reconnoitred by the sharp eyes of eight young lady boarders and two teachers, standing in Miss Odger's dining-room window. At length the door was opened by a slipshod servant-maid, who slammed it to in their faces again while she went in to tell her mistress who was there. After the lapse of a minute or two, a vixenish little woman, with black beadlike eyes and very sharp features, made her appearance; and although, doubtless, she looked as pleasant as she possibly could, Reginald thought her the most sour-looking person he had ever seen. She was dressed in black, with an abundance of black glass bugles in her hair and all about her; and the flour still sticking about her hands and sleeves, and sprinkled plentifully down the front of her gown, told most unmistakably that she had been called from making the family pudding. She addressed them in a shrill, sharp voice; and having learned their business, told them she thought they would find Mr. Strongi'th'arm up the garden, pointing at the same time to a second green door in a brick wall at the top of the playground, with which remark she withdrew again into the house. The Doctor and Regy, walking up the yard as directed, passed on their right hand the schoolroom, where a great noise was being made; whilst on their left was a particularly blank wall, the monotony of which was but slightly relieved by one of those two-sided pumps which, having a handle on each side of a party wall, supply two families with water: the Misses Odger and Mr. Strongi'th'arm drawing their water from the same fount—the pump aforesaid. Keeping straight on till they reached the green door at the top of the playground, the Doctor pushed and pulled for some time before he was able to produce any effect upon it, the door in question being what is familiarly called "*a sticker*." At last, however, with much dragging,

creaking and groaning, it yielded to the Doctor's vigorous shoves ; and the prospect thus suddenly disclosed by the unexpected opening of the obstinate door was a garden of no great extent, the principal features of which were a gravel walk that seemed to have halted between a wish to be a straight walk and an inclination to be a serpentine walk, until its surface had become covered with a most luxuriant growth of weeds and moss, and it had, from sheer inability to make up its mind, remained in its present condition—a path neither serpentine nor straight ; an old pear tree, leafless all the year round with the exception of a few animated twigs at the very top, six attenuated apple trees on espaliers, and two standard ditto in the last stage of decline ; three or four unsatisfactory gooseberry bushes, and one miserable looking currant bush, completed the catalogue of the larger specimens of the vegetable kingdom. The borders had once been edged with box, of which some irregular patches still remained ; the ornamental departments of horticulture were extensively represented by such useful and elegant plants as London-pride and stone-crop, which flourished in great luxuriance where not cut down to make way for cabbages, which useful vegetables shared the remaining empire, with an extraordinary collection of inverted red flower pots, which it may be supposed covered something, but which something a long experience of that garden tells me never came up. The popular idea was, that the soil, which was very black, was too rich for anything but cabbages to do well in ; but this was only what the boys thought, and is scarcely worthy of attention.

At the extreme end of this gravel walk was a small and dilapidated greenhouse, the panes of glass in which were broken much more frequently by the street boys over the wall, than they were repaired again at the expense of their spirited proprietor. In the farthest corner of this greenhouse—(the title whereof was a pleasing satire upon the contents, which consisted of a few plants in pots apparently dying a lingering death, a great many more of all sorts and sizes that were unmistakably dead, and a vine about the vitality of which you would find it difficult to pronounce a decided opinion ; at first sight it certainly looked dead, but upon a closer examination a man of sanguine temperament might hope it would revive again under favourable circumstances)—was a rusty iron stove, and close to this stove was a mammoth flower-pot, on which was placed a board that had been, when the Miss Strong-

i'th'arms were young, the board of a swing in the old pear-tree, but now covered with part of an old green baize pew cushion, served as a seat. Delicately poised on this singular stool sat Mr. Strongi'th'arm, one foot being planted on the stove and one against the piping, while his head rested for support against a door opening into the garden, his left ear being pressed against the brass knob of the same. When his visitors arrived at the entrance of this singular retreat, Mr. Strongi'th'arm, it being about ten A.M., was deliberately smoking a long and not over-clean clay pipe, of the genus "yard of clay"—species "churchwarden," and reading from a German poet. Mr. Strongi'th'arm was a short elderly gentleman inclined to obesity, and dressed in a threadbare black coat and waistcoat, and iron-grey breeches much bagged at the knees, and turned yellow in various parts from being scorched at the fire and other causes ; grey worsted stockings, calf-skin slippers, much down at heel, and a faded yellow bandanna round his neck, completed his costume.

At the sight of intruders he assumed a war-like attitude, and uttered the word N-A-S-T-Y slowly, and, as it were, letter by letter, but in most undeniably bellicose tones, probably thinking that either Mr. Tinkler, the teacher, or some of the boys, had dared to penetrate the inmost recesses of his *sanctum* ; but observing, after two or three rushes and retreats, the determined coolness of the presumed enemy, he came near enough to the Doctor and Reginald to discover his mistake, when he assumed a very comical grin and tried to hide the guilty "churchwarden" behind his back, at the same time extending his right hand to the Doctor, and welcoming his new pupil with various eccentric symptoms of delight.

"How do you do?" said he, shaking hands familiarly with Doctor Gasc. "I didn't know who it was. I thought it was some of those boys, you know." Here he grinned, showing his yellow tobacco-stained teeth. "I knew it could not be Mrs. Strongi'th'arm, for she can't open that door." And here he grinned and chuckled in a more comical way than before. The secret of his choosing such an out-of-the-way sitting-room was, because that was the only spot on the premises where he felt safe from the attacks of Mrs. Strongi'th'arm ; it was his custom "of an afternoon," like Hamlet's father, to retire, to spend a "sécure hour" in his orchard, and also in a morning the Dominie found it as comfortable as anywhere else.

Finding it impossible to conceal his pipe

from his visitors, he hid it away carefully in an obscure crack in the bricks, and then turned his way towards the garden door.

"I'm not fit," he said, extending his hands after the manner of innocent persons on the stage, "not fit to see anybody. I have sent those boys in, and I had just gone to sit down for a minute. I haven't got a collar on," he continued, fumbling at that part of his shirt where the collar ought to have been found, "in a morning, you know——"

The Doctor here interrupted his apologies by assuring him they were needless, and proceeded to set him at his ease by introducing a fresh subject of conversation, with the perfect politeness of an old-fashioned French gentleman.

To tell the truth, the Dominie was not much disconcerted, he was only pretending a bit ; they strolled leisurely up the gravel path, Mr. Strongi'th'arm with his hand on Reginald's shoulder, the Doctor and the Dominie discussing various matters relating to his education, the while.

"He'd better dine with us, you know," said the schoolmaster, in his most insinuating manner. "I can do as well again with them if they have their dinner with me ; and Mrs. Strongi'th'arm, she likes them to dine," he added.

The Doctor hesitated, and looked at Master Regy, whose bright eyes scarcely seemed to approve of this arrangement.

"Eh!" said the Dominie inquiringly. "I didn't hear what you said. I am so deaf, you know," he continued, tapping his left ear. "You recollect I consulted you about it before. It's that door handle, I think—sitting leaning against that. I had not used to be so deaf."

There was a slight popular prejudice in the school that Mr. Strongi'th'arm (or Old Jimmy, as he was familiarly called by his promising pupils) was not deaf even now. It was urged by them that his deafness was of a very convenient sort, and that he only could not hear when he did not want, it being confidently asserted that if anybody by any chance had happened to remark to the Dominie, in ever so low a voice, "Jimmy, here is a sovereign for you," he would have heard it in an instant. But this failing of his, the Doctor, who was very simple-minded, being indeed simplicity itself, and often imposed upon in consequence, was not likely to detect ; accordingly after some more talk and after consulting Regy apart, it was agreed he should dine with Mr. Strongi'th'arm's other boys at two o'clock on all the days of the week except Saturdays and Sundays. This

arrangement, to the common advantage of all the parties concerned, being made, the Dominie bade the Doctor good morning, bowing him out at the green door, and then taking Regy's hand and saying to him, "Come along, my little man," he started off at a very rapid pace, down the yard towards the schoolroom, dragging the new boy with him, as he took alternately two short steps and then a very long one, until they reached the doorway of the staircase leading up to the schoolroom. Here he let Regy's hand go, and, assuming a very fierce expression, bounded up the twenty-one creaking old wooden stairs, it seemed to Regy, at one step.

No sooner were footsteps heard on the stairs, than there was a great running and scuffling about in the room overhead, and when Regy reached the top, quite out of breath, the room was so full of dust he could hardly see across it, and there stood the Dominie, gasping out "N-a-s-t-y," in the same emphatic manner in which he had uttered it in the garden. When the clouds of dust cleared off a little, Reginald found himself in an old high-roofed room, with low desks and forms all round it, at which about twenty little boys of ages varying from nine to thirteen or fourteen were seated. At the farther end of the room was a gallery with balusters in front, and on a board beneath them, the first fourteen "props" of the first book of Euclid were held above the urchins' heads *in terrorem*; under this gallery was a fireplace, and on each side of the fireplace was a desk, the property of Mr. Strongi'th'arm and Mr. Tinkler respectively—the Dominie's being much closer to the fire than the usher's. When the Dominie and Reginald entered, Mr. Tinkler, who instead of keeping order had been engaged in composing a sonnet in honour of and addressed to Miss Lucy Strongi'th'arm, of whom he was supposed to be most violently enamoured, slowly folded his verses, and opening the lid of his desk put them into it, until such time as he should be able to resume his pleasant task.

"Mis-ter Tinkler," said the Dominie, marching straight up to the usher's desk, and emphasizing each syllable in a peculiarly impressive manner. "Mister Tink-ler, what is all this dust about? As usual there is no seeing across the place for dust."

This statement was about true; for in the Dominie's absence the young gentlemen, having placed as a *watch*, at the door, the most easily imposed upon of the youngest boys, were in the habit of indulging in the games common to their time of life, including everything from pitch-and-toss, to leap-frog

and pitched battles; whilst in their calmer moments they gave vent to their manly feelings by smoking pieces of cane, or tobacco rolled up in brown paper—the result of these combined pursuits being the total eclipse of poor Mr. Tinkler in dust and smoke. Not a very favourable atmosphere for writing love sonnets in, perhaps, but it served well enough for Mr. Strongi'th'arm's assistant—a dull, guileless, weak, impressionable Oxford graduate, who, though stupid and poor, had conscientious scruples about entering the Church, and quite naturally took refuge in a school for little boys; here Mr. Tinkler had become, as it were, acclimatized to the dust and Mrs. Strongi'th'arm's temper, and had fallen so desperately in love with Miss Lucy, as to be oblivious of every earthly concern besides.

At Mr. Strongi'th'arm's request, having first given a mild vacant answer to his query, he led the new pupil to a place on a low form by one of the desks, where Reginald made himself as comfortable as circumstances permitted.

CHAPTER V.

SCHOOL.

"NOW, then," said the Dominie, planting himself in front of the fire and calling the attention of his pupils from the new boy. "Now, then, that first class, this moment."

Obedient to this summons, about seven boys, whose ages varied between eleven and thirteen, tumbled out from their places at the desks, and took up their stations in a line as near to the Dominie and the fireplace as was compatible with being out of the reach of a gutta percha whip, which Old Jimmy flourished about him, occasionally stirring the fire with the butt end, much to the damage of his novel poker. Just to ensure attention, he struck the lid of his desk very smartly with his gutta percha, and then made a lunge of a desperate and complicated character at the bottom boy of the class, who seemed unable, without a little friendly assistance from the schoolmaster, to keep his eyes off Reginald.

"Impi-dence!" cried the Dominie. "You turn round here, sir."

Having thus procured order, he proceeded, addressing the top boy, "Now, then, give me the book."

The boy handed him a Latin grammar.

"What's all this about," demanded the Dominie, looking up from the book. "Didn't I say those Greek paradigms were to be got by heart. Now go on with them this instant."

The top boy hesitated and cast down his eyes.

"Next," said Mr. Strongi'th'arm, pointing with his whip successively at each hopeful pupil, "next—next."

Not one could—or would—go on.

"Well!" roared Mr. Strongi'th'arm, making a sweeping cut at them all, which drove them back a few paces. "Ugh—it's enough to drive anybody mad. Not one step shall one of you stir till they are said."

"We thought it was the Latin, please, sir," said the top boy.

"*Thought it was the Latin,*" said Mr. Strongi'th'arm, taking him up sharply. I dare say you did, or anything else for a shuffle—as USUAL. Impudence and ignorance combined. Come, be off—places! It makes my flesh crawl to look at you. Corrupt—you'd corrupt the morals of a whole parish, to say nothing of one school. Come—away with you—away with you!"

Mr. Strongi'th'arm next turned his attention to the studies of the second class of his boys, in the form and manner following: striking the lid of his desk smartly with his whip, he called out with great energy,—

"*Second Class,* this instant!"

Seven or eight boys, smaller than the last obeyed his angry summons.

"*Latin Irregulars,*" cried the Dominie, addressing the top boy, who began accordingly, but was abruptly stopped by Mr. Strongi'th'arm, who exclaimed—

"*Nouns,* you idiot!"

"*Adjectives,*" said the pupil, mildly.

"*Nouns,* you idiotic shuffler!"

"*Adjectives,*" remonstrated the shuffler.

"We've done the nouns," said the bottom boy, in an injured tone.

"*NOUNS!*" cried the Dominie, resenting the bottom boy's intrusion by making a sweep at the class with his whip, which drove them back some distance.

"Go on!" roared Mr. Strongi'th'arm; "next, next," he continued, pointing at the boys with his whip.

"Please, sir——" said a very doughy boy who stood fifth in the class.

"*WELL,*" said the Dominie, at the same time assuming his most satirical manner, "and what do you wish to say? If there is a rotten stick in the hedge it is sure to crack first. *WELL?* Now do you hear me, sir," he continued, pointing to the top boy, "*LAT-IN Ir-reg-u-LARS.*"

"*Ædes-aqua-auxilium-car——*" the top boy began.

"I have heard that every day for a fortnight," said the Dominie. "*Focus-locus* is what I want."

The boy hung down his head in conscious ignorance of the next thing to *focus* and *locus* in the awful category.

"Mis-ter Tink-ler," cried Mr. Strongi'th'arm, "I'm going slowly mad, *the* impudence and *the* ignorance of these idiotic scribblers puts me into a cold perspiration. Now mark me, not one of 'em stirs one inch till I have got *focus* and *locus*."

The further remarks of the Dominie were interrupted by a loud knock at the rickety door. A tall quixotic man, a few years younger than Mr. Strongi'th'arm, whose black clothes hung loosely about his spare person, entered and marched straight up to the spot where the Dominie sat.

"Oh, Odger, it's you," he said, his manner instantly softening. "Away, idiots—places—this moment." And the boys scrambled into their seats.

"How are you this morning, Odger?"

"Dyspeptic — bilious — low," replied his friend. "How are you, Dominie?"

"Driven mad by scribbling impudence and idiocy com-bined," said the Dominie, angrily. "Boys I've had, and boys, Odger; but such a set as I've got now—U-g-h. Words won't express my feelings, Odger, my very flesh crawls when I look at them. But mind," he added, "not one stirs one inch till the work's done; you all hear that, Mister Tinkler."

"I have heard from Bull, the overseer, about the rate," Mr. Odger remarked.

"Come then," replied the Dominie, "come up the garden and let's hear all about it."

And taking his friend's arm the stout Dominie trudged by the side of the lean Mr. Odger out of the schoolroom, towards that *sanctum* in which Reginald and Dr. Gasc had disturbed him half an hour previously. The Dominie had no sooner turned the corner at the bottom of the schoolroom stairs, than signs began to manifest themselves that he was a man of many threats and few performances. Most of the boys left their seats, whilst a few of the hardiest poked their mischievous heads out of the windows, to report Old Jimmy's safe arrival at his destination, the hot-house.

"Garden-gate," cried one of these adventurous youths.

"Gravel path," was the next report. "Walking Skeleton" (Mr. Peter Odger) stopping to blow his nose."

"Old pear-tree," was next reported safely

reached, and then "Shut in the green-house," set their minds at ease. The ringleaders put some more coals on the fire and poked it up, and then opened the door and placed a *watch* there, not so much on the Dominie's account as to be prepared for a sortie from Mrs. Strongi'th'arm, and then all the school clustered round the new boy, while Mr. Tinkler quietly opened his desk, took out his papers, and proceeded with his sonnet to the charming Miss Lucy Strongi'th'arm.

"What's *your* name?" cried the cock of the school, to the new arrival.

"Reginald Erle," replied our little hero.

"Ever been to school before?"

"No."

"Then who taught you?"

"Fath—— I mean Mister Lavelle."

"Who is your father?" demanded another young gentleman. Reginald hesitated a moment; the idea was a new one, he had never thought of this before. He was relieved from his difficulty by the boy who sat next to him—a sturdy fellow of twelve.

"Here Erle," said this young gentleman, "take no notice of them—don't bother with them. Can you do *rule of three*?"

"Y-e-s," said Regy, modestly, poor boy, blushing a little at his learning, "a little I can."

"Then do this sum for me, that's a good one, whilst I have a smoke. My name's Brewster, Frank Brewster. Erle, if you can do *rule of three*, we shall be jolly friends in no time. I can't."

So Regy set to work at his new friend's arithmetical problem, while he, sticking some three or four inches of a common cane into his mouth, strode, with his hands in his pockets, to the fire to light it, and took the other youths with him. Not above an inch and a half of Brewster's cane was consumed by that manly youth, when the little *watch* at the door shot like a rocket to his seat; at this signal all the boys made a rush to their places, and before the stragglers were ready, in marched Mrs. Strongi'th'arm. She halted about half way down the school, and made a note or two in pencil upon a paper she held in her hand; then addressing Mr. Tinkler she said,

"Mr. Strongi'th'arm idling with that Odger, I presume?"

That Odger and Mr. Strongi'th'arm had been rival suitors for her virgin hand, when her father gave up keeping school.

Mr. Tinkler believed that Mr. Strongi'th'arm was with Mr. Odger.

"Then," said Mrs. Strongi'th'arm, with considerable asperity, "why is he? Mr. Tinkler, I repeat why is he? He knows he might as well leave my daughter Lucy here as you, for any influence you have over these reprobates." This was said with a matronly scowl. Mrs. Strongi'th'arm's attention was now attracted by the unusual amount of coal on the fire. "Whose impudence is this?" she asked, taking the lumps off and putting them carefully under the grate. "May I ask," she continued, turning tartly upon Mr. Tinkler, "if you lent your sanction to this extravagant consumption of Wallsend? Are you aware, Mr. Tinkler, that, at this season of the year, every lump of coal burnt in this establishment costs twenty shillings and sixpence per ton. I declare," she added, with increasing severity, "at the rate we are going on in this particular, the playground might be a pit, and the garden a coal-field, and no further exertion required than going out with spades and forks to dig it."

Receiving no answer, other than an awful silence, she proceeded. "Let Mr. Strongi'th'arm be summoned from his improper retreat; say 'Mr. Smith, the pen-man.'" Having issued this command, Mrs. Strongi'th'arm advanced with dignity to the door, when casting her eye over her paper, she said, in her usual shrill tones, "Brewster, Ward, and Johnstone, out of place: not a creature doing a stroke of work; this will be communicated to Mr. Strongi'th'arm;" and, having uttered this warning, withdrew.

Mr. Smith, the pen-man, carrying a large brown paper package, soon made his appearance, and shortly after the Dominie entered the schoolroom.

"Well," said he, not noticing the visitor, "and whose impudence is this, sending for me?"

"Mrs. Strongi'th'arm's!" cried a dozen voices at once.

"O-h-h!" said the Dominie, in an altered tone, "what mischief is being done then? the place set on fire, or blown up with gunpowder, or somebody killed, or what?"

At this juncture, Mr. Smith presented himself to the Dominie, at the same time opening his parcel.

"Stop, stop, stop," cried Mr. Strongi'th'arm, putting out his hands in a deprecatory manner. "Don't open it, don't open it. I shan't buy anything to-day—got everything."

"I want to show you our new pen," said Mr. Smith, proceeding with the unpacking of his parcel.

"Don't want pens," said the Dominie.

"And," continued the stationer, "our copy and exercise books?"

"Don't want paper," said the Dominie.

"Walkden's ink, done up in gallon jars?"

"Don't want ink," said the Dominie. "Mr. Tinkler, I think it is not many weeks since I bought a box of pens. But pens, ink, and paper are thrown away upon a herd of idiotic scribblers. Sha'n't buy any more. Now come—first class!"

The lessons were only over a few minutes before the bell rang for dinner.

The boys, Regy among the number, trooped down the creaking old stairs into the yard. The dining-room was under the school-room, and adjoining it was a lavatory. Here Regy was directed by his new friend, Frank Brewster, to wash his face and try to scrub the ink off his fingers before they were summoned to dinner. The bell for that meal was rung outside the door by Mr. Strongi'th'arm in person.

"Hallo!" cried Brewster, "there's Old Jimmy with the bell. Come along," and he hurried Regy into the room.

Mr. Strongi'th'arm sat at the end of the form on one side of the table; the usher, Mr. Tinkler, occupied the seat next him; opposite them were the seats of the two Miss Strongi'th'arms; while the seat of honour, at the end of the long deal table, was reserved for Mrs. Strongi'th'arm.

A very plain pudding, made of bread boiled in a basin and served with a little relish of fat gravy, was brought in by a red-faced maid and placed opposite Mrs. Strongi'th'arm's seat; but that lady had not yet arrived.

"Stickjack again!" exclaimed a boy near Reginald. "I declare it's a roaring shame. That's the third time this week."

"Impudence!" said the Dominie, who heard the whispering. "Order—not one word!"

The Miss Strongi'th'arms, both looking out of temper, now made their appearance and took their seats opposite their father and Mr. Tinkler. The usher became absorbed in the contemplation of Miss Lucy.

"Lucy, where is your ma?" asked the father.

Miss Lucy regarded the window with fixed attention.

"Do you hear?" cried the Dominie.

"Emily, where is your mother?"

"Don't be so ridiculous, pa; you know as well as I do. I've no patience with the ridiculous questions you are always asking."

"Whose turn is it?" the Dominic inquired, looking at the boys. "Go on there—grace."

Grace having been said, the Dominic rose from his seat and was about to attack the pudding, when Miss Emily thought it her duty to interfere.

"What are you about, pa?" she exclaimed.

"What will ma say?" asked Miss Lucy.

However, pa, nothing daunted, took a knife and spoon that lay beside him, remarking to his daughters that he was not going to wait for everything to get cold. Upon this Miss Emily seized the uplifted and offending spoon.

"What!" said her father, "and are you going to be a fool and all? Are not Loo and your ma enough to drive a man mad?"

At this instant a rustling was heard outside, and the Dominic had just glided back into his seat, when Mrs. Strongi'th'arm strode into the room.

"Pa was just going to begin," cried both young ladies.

"Hum!" snorted their mother. "Upon my word, this is a fine example of politeness for the boys, Mr. Strongi'th'arm."

The Dominic maintained a discreet silence, and Mrs. Strongi'th'arm began to help the pudding, serving rhubarb jam with it to the young ladies and their father, and the fat gravity to the rest.

"Did you hear my remark," she said—"a nice example for the boys."

"Oh! delicious," said the Dominic, with his mouth full of pudding. "What *is* this, ma?" and he smacked his lips with the ecstacy of a *gourmet* at the discovery of a new flavour.

"Don't be ridiculous, pa," said Miss Emily. You know perfectly well what it is."

"I don't, though," said the old gentleman. "I know it's delicious. What *is* it, ma?"

"Don't be absurd, Mr. Strongi'th'arm," said his wife, with a slightly softened asperity.

"You know it's rhubarb, pa," said Miss Lucy. "You are always going on in this absurd way, when you can taste all the while as well as we can."

"I'm sure I thought it was apricot," said the Dominic. "It's just as good."

Mrs. Strongi'th'arm's sour face brightened a little at this compliment, though she had often heard it from her husband before: however, she improved the occasion for the benefit of the boys.

"You recollect," she said, "that good boy, whose aunt used to send us the apricots, in the *large basket*, every autumn?—he used to say he would sooner have Mrs. Strongi'th'arm's bread than anybody else's cake."

"To be sure I do," said the Dominic; and so peace was established between them.

Poor Reginald was unable to eat more than a few mouthfuls of his *stickjack*, though all the other boys' plates were clean enough. He wondered how in the world they could get through it so fast; nor was his surprise diminished when Brewster showed him a large lump in a pocket-handkerchief on his knee. A joint of beef followed the pudding, and was carved by Mr. Strongi'th'arm. After this was dispatched another boy said grace, and they left the room.

That afternoon the Dominic, who, with all his eccentricity, had some pretension to the name of scholar, sat with his slippers off, warming first one grey-stockinged foot and then the other at his fire, and with his pupils all round him, gave them a deal of instruction in a short space of time and in a very happy manner, impressing some of the elements of polite learning very forcibly on their minds.

CHAPTER VI.

MISS MARGARET'S PARTY.

WE left the fiddles scraping away in the ball-room, at Madingley, and have kept Miss Mabel Despencer and Master Charlie Mortimer and her cousin, the most noble Marquis of Malton, and all Miss Margaret's other little guests, waiting while we turned our attention towards so unfashionable a neighbourhood as Bartholomew Square, or to Dominic Strongi'th'arm's school. While we have been regarding the doings of Dr. Gasc and Madam McCara, and watching Reginald Erle's first entry into public life, we have been neglecting this grand company of aristocratic personages, young and old, and we feel almost as if some apology was due to their highnesses, for such a breach of decorum. However, we will now make them our best amends.

Half-past eight—the time set for the ceremonies to begin—had passed by nearly sixty minutes, when the little Marquis of Malton, to whom Sir Harold was guardian, a pale pasty boy of thirteen, accompanied by Master Geoffrey Childers, and Robert Mortimer's son, a handsome dark-eyed curly-haired boy of nine, called Charles, after the old Whig peer, his grandfather, and Harold, after his uncle, entered the room, and they were speedily followed by Sir Everard's little daughter, Mabel, a lovely little fairy in white and blue; the Marquis led Miss Mabel Despencer, and Charlie Mortimer led Miss Honoria Cholmley,

Lord Berkhamstead's daughter, into the ball-room, the band played a quadrille, and dancing began.

Old Sir Everard conducted Miss Margaret to a settee, with the most stately politeness, and Mr. Campbell followed them to witness the pretty scene.

"This," said Campbell to Miss Mortimer, "is very lively. There is, I think, no greater pleasure than the sight of a party of children, all life and frolic, disporting themselves thus."

"It is a sight I love to see, Mr. Campbell. We always have them to a picnic in the summer; but I believe the children like this better."

A waltz followed the quadrille. The dancers danced right merrily; to see their graceful forms and twinkling feet, twirling round and round in the mazes of the dance, made the dowagers, their mammams, feel children again themselves.

"Papa," cried little Mabel, running gaily up to Sir Everard, "I want you so to dance with me, you know you promised me."

"My child, I really think——"

"Now no excuses, papa;" and the pretty Mabel took off the old baronet to join in the Lancers, much against the inclination of his gouty old toes. He persevered through the first four figures; but was beaten at the fifth, and gave it up.

Malton claimed Mabel's hand, and led her away from Sir Everard, who was now recovering his breath.

"How is that boy getting on, eh! Mr. Campbell?" he said, as soon as he could speak again.

"The Marquis? Well I wish we had a little more application, Sir Everard," replied the tutor.

"Why, what are you reading?" demanded the baronet.

"Virgil at present; but our progress is slow."

"Teach him something amusing, that's my idea of education," said Sir Everard, with great importance.

"I *will* hear what Sir Everard says about boys," exclaimed old Lady Barrenacre, who had seven daughters, all of whom she would gladly have married to Malton, and three sons she would have readily given up to Mabel—when the time came.

"Teach them something amusing, I say," continued the baronet, quite pleased. "I know I got on best with Propertius and Johannes Secundus."

"You are not serious, sir?" said Campbell.

"Perfectly, perfectly. It is always my argu-

ment that the whole system of education is radically wrong; boys get hold of books they feel no interest in. Give them interest, you will soon have progress."

"That seems very rational, like all you say, Sir Everard," exclaimed Lady Barrenacre, tapping the baronet's shoulder with her fan, as she went away to console the sixth Miss Barrenacre for a rent in her dress, which seriously impeded her further progress.

"Lord, what a fellow Malton's father was!" said Sir Everard to Mr. Campbell. "Lord, what things we used to do!" and the old gentleman chuckled at the recollections of his naughty youth. "Mad Maltons, they have always called 'em; but gad he was the maddest of the lot."

"Have you observed," said Campbell, "that such epithets are commonly alliterative. In Scotland, for instance, we have the bold Buccleughs—the gallant Grahames—the handsome Hays. Did the Maltons owe their *sobriquet* to their deeds?"

"Gad! that boy's father did. There's little Childers; what a life his father used to lead before he married that hideous old actress. I recollect his father before him, too, in the thick of the Prince's set. Fiery Jack, the father, and Fiery Jack, the son, they used to be called."

"Truthful, possibly; but certainly not complimentary."

"Oh! they were fine fellows, the Childerses were all alike, all the family of 'em; it used to be said of them that they were the finest horsemen, the hardest drinkers, and," added the old baronet, in lower tone, with a sly twinkle in his eyes, "the best companions in the world;" and he laughed a dry wicked old laugh, and moved off to make old Colonel Chutney very irate by knowing better than he did what ingredients the cook at Black's always put into his particular pilau.

"Aunt Margaret! Aunt Margaret!" cried Charlie Mortimer, "Mabel is so rude, she dances with Malton every dance. It is rude, is it not?"

"For the matter of that, Master Charlie," said the little lady of eleven, "I like the Marquis quite as well as you, and I may dance with him as often as I like." But at the same time she gave her dainty hand to Charlie, and so appeased his wrath.

"Look at those two children," said Sir Everard, joining Mr. Campbell, who was standing alone in a corner of the room, "what a handsome couple they make;" and he eyed them with doting fondness through his glasses.

"I always hope to see them married; in fact, I mean they should be. You know my lands join Mortimer's; well, mine are settled in tail general, and his are in tail male; and we've only to marry those two children, and then what an estate there is." And the old father dilated at great length on the prospect of the union between the heiress of the Despercens and the heir of the Mortimers, and seemed mightily pleased at the prospect. "We are poor men, Sir Harold and I, with our fifteen thousand a year or so, but look what a fortune they will have."

And he paraded up and down the room till he felt inclined to join the company in the drawing-room. Among the ladies he was most officiously polite, airing his faded compliments and old-fashioned pleasantries with great gusto.

"My dear Mrs. Carrington," he said, addressing an old flame, "you shall give us 'Water parted.'" Not one note of which he could hear, though he pretended to be so charmed, exclaiming—"Exquisite! charming! such a treat!" as Mrs. Carrington left the piano.

"Old bird will pay for this in the morning," said Captain Cholmley to a friend. "Won't be so lively then, I know; doosid old fool he is."

So the evening passed till refreshments were served in the great picture gallery, and all the children came trooping in to supper, horrifying the mammas with their rapid consumption of all sorts of eatables.

"Aunt Margaret, how greedy Malton is; he has picked all the truffles out of that pie," cried Charlie.

"Hush! hush! my boy," his aunt replied, stroking his dark curls.

"Well, he is. Mr. Campbell says he eats too much; I heard him tell Uncle Harold so."

The Marquis's tastes were a sad trouble to his tutor and his guardian.

Not many months after this party at Madingley Chase little Mabel was left an orphan.

One morning when Sir Everard's factotum went in to his chamber to draw up his blinds and to tell him the time of day, he got no answer from his master. The old baronet lay lifeless in his bed, in his fine house in Arlington Street.

There, on the dressing-table, were his teeth in the glass, and his old wig on its stand, and before the mirror his old prayer-book lying open. So he *had* said his prayers on this his

last opportunity here. Then came in due course the notice in the *Morning Post*, that Sir Edward Everard Despencer, Bart., had died at his house in Arlington Street; and when the will was read it was found that Sir Harold Mortimer was the only surviving guardian appointed to take charge of the little Mabel; and in a codicil it was expressed, as her father's dying wish, that she, the heiress of the Despercens, should marry the heir of the Mortimers, and have her father's blessing.

So Mabel Despencer went to live with Sir Harold and Miss Margaret at Madingley Chase.

HENRI, EARL DE ROCHEFORT-LUÇAY.

CERTAINLY—Henri, *Earl* de Rochefort-Luçay, the second title in the family—the head of the family still being the Marquis de Rochefort, a man who with some of the best blood in his veins, had to submit to the necessity of earning his bread as a literary man, and who consequently has grown old and broken before his time.

It will delight those who feel that everything in this world is for the best, that it is right and proper the son Rochefort should know, and suffer in the knowledge, that his father is not with him in his deplorable republican tendencies.

Indeed, it is very odd to contemplate the fact that the powerful leader of the French mob, the man whom the *sans-culottes* meet with an "*evoué*" of welcome whenever he shows his ugly head in the streets, is actually an earl; that his father is a marquis, and that his people for hundreds of years have clung to the kingly and aristocratic in their lives. Their ancestors were on the side of Catherine de Medici when she manipulated the Protestants; they were with the dragoons of Louis XIV. when the Protestants again were treated to governmental measures; they were on the side of the court when Louis XVI. made his exit from this darksome valley by the hurried way of the guillotine; they welcomed the Bourbons back to France; went over to the younger branch of the family when the Orleanists supplanted the Bourbons; bowed to the things that were when Napoleon quieted the streets on that celebrated *Deux Décembre*; and finally, Monsieur, the marquis, sufficiently esteemed the position and dignities of the aristocracy to which his family had belonged for many generations, by studiously preventing his title

from being associated with his literary work. Monsieur le Marquis de Rochefort wrote comedies, and lived by them, but he took great care not to offend his aristocratic connections by putting his title on a playbill.

What those aristocratic connections think of the present state of things with the last of the Rocheforts, Henri, the Radical Deputy in the Corps Legislatif, is a question, the answer to which must be left to the imagination.

M. Rochefort himself has given up the distinguished prefix "de" in signing his name, and he has never used his title.

If you are willing to have Rochefort's portrait, here it is. A very high square head—square and high especially in the forehead—covered with a veritable bush of frizzy hair, as rampant as its master, and defying the patient attentions of a comb and brush. The brow has but one wrinkle between the eyes; and the eyebrows, straight and flat, somewhat overhang the eyes. The celebrated line at an angle of forty-five, lying between the corner of the mouth and just above the nostril is distinguishable as *commencing* on each cheek. (In older men, this notoriously "political *ricтус*" is much more definite. It may be seen very distinctly in Mr. Gladstone.) The nose is forcible, rather than beautiful, but it is well formed. The mouth still has traces of youth in it, but it is forcible, straight, quiet and by no means sinuous. The upper lip is not so thick as the lower, the lower is rather kindly than sensual. If there is failure in this face it is in the jaw line, which is weak, and even almost gentle. The test of a vulgar man, the ear, this Republican can bear without much fear. That organ is large, certainly, but well formed, and flat to the head. Now the flatness of the ear is the measure of aristocratic birth, say Lavater and two other physiognomical dictators. In its entirety Rochefort's face is rather inquiring than determined, rather forming than formed. His great personal drawbacks are these: that his complexion is abominable, being green and sallow, while the paucity of hair on the lower part of his face contrasts to his injury with the thick naturally frizzing hair rampant over the head.

Nobody will deny that in certain places and with certain people, Rochefort is looked upon as a trouble—and he is. Indeed, should it happen that the present dynasty in France fell (in other words, should Rochefort's party really get its way), Rochefort himself would be a more confused paradox than he is now; for in the event of a French republic being declared, he would, as the leader and the darling of the

people, be declared "President," an honour which he would distinctly refuse, if he should adhere to the principles he has enunciated all his life—to the effect that it is immoral to be a leader.

In fact, Rochefort was a trouble even in his birth, for his head was so large that he appeared a physical monstrosity, exactly as now, amongst some superior people, he is looked upon as a moral monster. However, his mother, who died some years since (three), actually liked him, a fact which may be accounted for upon natural principles. In fact she found him positively good-looking. However, the professional nurse with whom he was placed out at an early period of his existence (after the amiable method common in French families) found this huge head a very painful presence, and disguised it brilliantly by the use of a huge blue baby sun-bonnet, which had simply the effect of being too big. And thus the scandal of the young earl's large head was diverted, and the *paysanne* was at peace. This country person herself had somewhat vigorous ideas with regard to her young charge, and was pleased to remark, that if ever *Monsieur le Comte* brought money to his family, it would be by way of exhibiting himself as a natural curiosity.

That an individual who had startled his family, and, far more deplorably, his professional nurse, with a boss of a head which suggested water upon the brain, but which was in reality only the result of the possession of a larger amount than ordinary of brain-matter—that such an individual should create some amount of excitement when he became a schoolboy, appears natural.

However, as a child, strange to say, he was modest, had little to say for himself, and actually was supposed in his family to dislike the inevitable pot of jam which comes on a French dinner-table for the children, simply because he did not, upon some particular birthday, ask for a portion of that jam which was not helped to him as to the others.

He was born in the year 1832, the year of the terrible outbreak of cholera. It can therefore readily be understood that there was something even ominous in his birth.

He was as awkward as a boy as to-day he is at thirty-seven. Actually he cannot dance or sing, and only learnt to swim when he was almost grown up. His style of learning to swim proves how deplorably wrong the man is. Being defied to swim a race with a certain friend, he flung himself into deep water, and went down like a stone. His present enemies

will never forgive the companion who dived and found him at the bottom of the water—quite as senseless as certain people believe this agitator to be at the present moment.

Such is an example of what Rochefort's friends are pleased to call his bravery.

However, as a schoolboy he was very extraordinary. Being born in 1832, in 1848, when the revolution broke out, he was little over fifteen, because he was born in June, and the revolution broke out in February. A school being a sort of world in miniature, when Rochefort's—the Lyceum of St. Louis—broke out into revolution against the master, it need not be said that Rochefort was the foremost leader. He made terms, and the principal (who, like many other principals since his time, did not know whether to admire or hate his young eccentric pupil) admitted that Rochefort could display ability.

Amongst his other faults, even at school, was an admiration for poetry. Indeed, so absurd was this tendency in him that when he began to scribble, actually he composed a five act play in verse, which he called the "White Page."

At this school he put a certain theme, given to the scholars, into verse, a very remarkable proceeding, the which being ashamed of, treacherously he induced a school-fellow to sign it. By a strange chance this deplorable composition was found to be very good, and obtained high commendation. Whereupon, the boy who had signed it got up and was sufficiently weak to admit that it was not his, but Rochefort's. The absurdity of these proceedings is completed by this fact, that Rochefort has never been able to refer without emotion to this conduct on the part of the boy, which he is strange enough to declare was most honourable.

From this period Rochefort was appointed the poet-laureate to the school, and of course he abused that position shamefully, as thus: In the June of 1848, the Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur Affre, being killed on the barricades, he was replaced by Monseigneur Sibour. Now it is the custom of French archbishops to recognise the value of schoolboys as shadowing out the strength of the next generation) in this way:—The cleverest boys at the metropolitan schools are invited to a breakfast at the archiepiscopal palace. Sibour gave the accustomed party almost immediately after obtaining his preferment, when an unhappy principal, desiring that his College of St. Louis should shine, requested the poet laureate to write an ode. Young Rochefort undertook

to do this, upon one condition, that it should not be seen until read before the archbishop. The principal, obviously a person of weak constitution, consented. And when the poem was produced, it was a satire, congratulating the archbishop upon his having taken under his protection certain orphans of certain political people, who had destroyed a certain political republican leader—one General Brea.

"I really cannot tell," said the unhappy schoolmaster to the youth's mother upon these premises, "I really cannot tell whether your son is a fool or a genius." And very probably, if the principal in question is still alive, he may yet be debating the question in his troubled mind.

That a youth of sixteen, who should beard an archbishop, would defy at thirty years an emperor, though backed by half a million soldiers, is a very natural anticipation.

The whole life of this man has been *bizarre*—preposterous in the extreme. At the early age of eighteen he obtained his B.A. degree, and before another year passed he had actually fallen in love in the most unguarded and astounding manner. Astounding, because the affair led to a duel at a time when he knew nothing of the use of arms.

The young lady was a distant cousin, to whose father's house came on a visit an officer of the then Sardinian army. The young Rochefort, who it is said by some has been a coward from his birth, had the weakness to request this officer to abstain from visiting the house. The officer laughed, and the boy was coward enough to strike him. He then carried his iniquities so far as to send a challenge to the officer, who, good tempered man, was desirous only of an apology or two. Rochefort would not apologise, and insisted upon fighting. The enormity of the affair was completed not by the boy meeting the officer, but being sufficiently cowardly to wound him. Rochefort was not wounded. He knew nothing of swordsmanship at that time. The officer remained in bed for three months. Rochefort was very properly requested not to visit at the house again, and the young cousin was sent away.

His cowardice inducing him to meet an officer in open duel when he was only nineteen, it is quite natural that Rochefort should again and again forget himself in a similar way. He has fought seven or eight duels.

Towards the end of 1850 misfortune fell upon the Rochefort family, and Henri Rochefort found himself in the ridiculous, and some people say well-deserved position, of being the

head of a family, and of being able to do nothing for that family. He could read and write Latin, and that was all. His father had desired that he should be a medical man, and to that end he had been made a medical student. But the ruin of the family stopped his studies, and turned him into a Latin master, earning about three half-crowns per week.

However, at that time the aristocraticism of the family being still recognised, he made application to the government for an appointment, and as at that time Napoleon III. was excessively desirous of propitiating those of the old nobility who were willing to be propitiated, Rochefort entered the government service as a supernumerary clerk in the Patent Office, where once again tyrannically he upset everything, and so frightened his superior that he made interest to get him a better position—in another office. However, he obtained but five pounds a month, and this, and the mild income derived from the Latin lessons by no means afforded luxuries to the entire family. At this point in his career he was sufficiently ridiculous to be without a sixpence in his pocket for weeks together, and he and a comrade would have a cup of black coffee between them, after the remarkable French manner.

The mother also was strange, for notwithstanding their poverty she made no debts, and managed her household stringently. She is described as a strange woman, for she on her side, though an aristocrat, declared aristocracy absurd. And even when dying, she carried her peculiarities so far that she despised the priesthood, and died, quite easily, without the benefit of extreme unction.

Rochefort at nineteen to twenty was actually careless, and being in the Audit Office made an error in adding up, which might have caused the government to overpay a bill to the extent of two thousand pounds. However, he did not lose his position, and Monsieur le Comte remained at this office through five years.

From an English point of view these five years were not properly spent. He paid attention to women, and he now has a daughter about sixteen years of age, whom he loves and whom he has educated, although she does not bear her father's name. Rochefort appears to be weak enough openly to avow his faults, and not to be strong enough to cover them with a proper mist of respectability, and conventional behaviour. Also, during this time, he tried to acquire the art of swordsmanship. But here his qualifications are not great. Indeed, it has been urged, that the reason why he has so

rarely been wounded in his duels, while his opponents have been seriously injured, is owing to his cowardly habit of keeping off the enemy's sword as much as possible, by maintaining his long arm out straight, so that sooner or later the opponent flings himself upon Rochefort's sword. A very cowardly and unsoldierlike habit this, on the part of Rochefort, it is maintained—by some people.

He also acquired the somewhat questionable talent of judging old masters, and of becoming an art critic. Altogether, many persons hold that during these years he was gradually going to the bad in the most determined manner. He actually contemplated becoming an author.

Nothing can more thoroughly prove the crooked policy adopted by Rochefort, it is on some sides urged, than the mode he took to cure himself of a natural giddiness. He climbed roofs, and hung by the edges of walls. However, he appears to have got his way, for he is no longer troubled by natural giddiness.

However, his old habits of bashfulness cling to him, his old awkwardness, and his deplorable memory. All his life this remarkable personage has been able to repeat verse that he likes after only once hearing it—in fact, he knows the poems of Victor Hugo by heart. But as to matters of importance, such as the hour of dinner, or an appointment to play dominoes, or take a walk, he forgets them entirely. Indeed, it is said that he forgets where he lives until he has occupied any given place for some time. What *can* there be in a man who forgets the number on his house door, or the name of the street in which he lives?

He was quite twenty-four before he commenced writing, and then he got nothing for his contributions. But what could his work be worth, when he could not remember the name of a friend with whom he had to dine at a certain restaurant, and when actually he put on an apron, and went with a waiter, as his assistant, from one room to another over the whole house, in the hope of finding the friend in question, when suddenly he remembered the dinner was to be at another place altogether, and not upon that particular day. He never wears a pair of gloves until they are dirty, because he is sure to loose one of the two while they are clean.

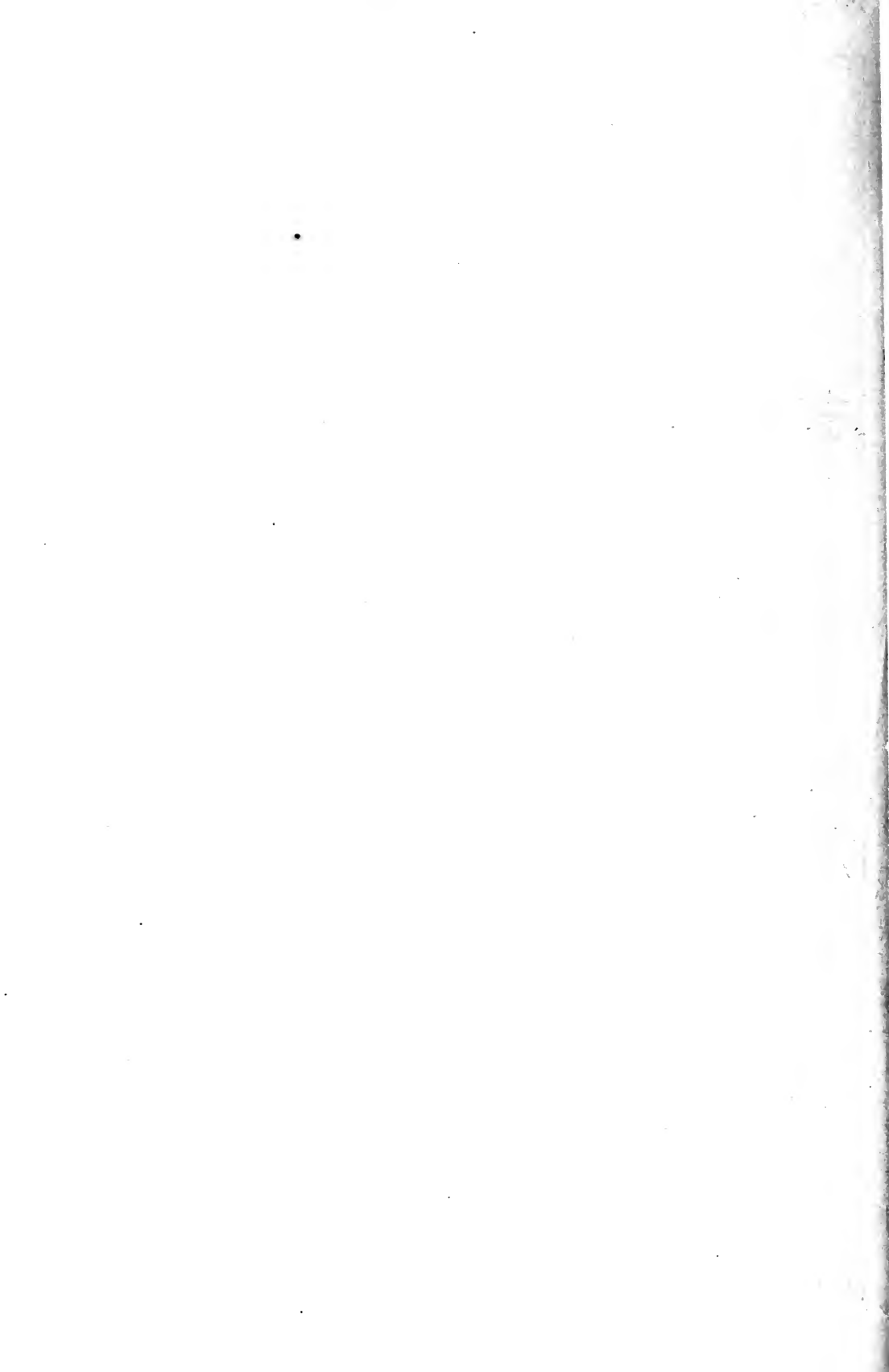
By the way, it has been said that finding the country nurse, to whom he had entrusted his child, behaved badly to the infant, he brought it to his garret, and nursed the little one himself. Some people have laughed very heartily over this picture of a tall, muscular man, nearly six feet high, nursing a baby.



Once a Week.

DOMINIE STRONGTHERM'S ACADEMY.—Page 49. (Phil.)

February 19, 1870.



He was dismissed from his first journal for "incapacity." He was epigrammatic, and of course his work was out of the question. Some time after, this gentle person was employed upon a "Dictionary of Etiquette."

His first piece for the stage produced him the ridiculous sum of six pounds. At last he reached the *Charivari*, when about thirty years of age, and he was blessed indeed to receive a penny per line for his work.

He was now dismissed his office for "bad writing," when he was sufficiently obtuse to urge that he could not comprehend how it came about that his writing was good enough under the Republic, and ultimately execrable under the Empire.

But the fatherly nature of the French government now became patent in relation to this undutiful son. After allowing him a three days' contemplation of dismissal, M. Hausseman himself sent for the young man, and gave him a better post than the one he had lost—he became sub-inspector of fine arts.

But the moment this misguided young man understood that the price of this preferment was the use of his pen in favour of the government, he threw up the post, to the great disgust of the two or three respectable persons who were merciful enough to rank amongst his friends.

He now became a Bohemian person—a regular and irregular literary man. He was forced to work.

Piece after piece succeeded each other, with more or less success—perhaps less than more—in all about a dozen.

His first hit was upon the *Charivari*; and when he had once made this hit, like other writers, whether right or wrong, he "went up" in the publishers' estimation with rapidity.

He was tempted from the *Charivari* to the *Nain Jaune*; from this to the *Figaro*, with a contract for a year (£240) for one article per week.

Next year the *Soleil* offered him £800 for the year. He was now made. The following season the *Figaro* tempted him back with £120 down, and a thousand a-year, for two articles per week. This paid all ways.

We all know what followed—the government warning given to the *Figaro*, the establishment of the *Lanterne*, the author's flight into Belgium, his condemnation to years of imprisonment, and hundreds of pounds of fines. Then followed the election of Paris, his appearance in the French parliament, and his more recent display in connection with

Victor Noir's death, and finally his arrest the other day.

The question remains—where will he end? He may become president of a French republic; it is more likely that he will either die of excitement or be assassinated.

However, whatever happens, he is now a short chapter of the history of France, where he takes his place as troubling the later half of the reign of Napoleon III., who is, by the grace of universal suffrage and certain ballot-boxes, Emperor of all the French.

THE ISLE OF AVALON.*

THE breeze that crisps the shining sea,
To fragrance-breathing haunts repairs
On violet-mantled hill and lea,
And garnered store of sweetness bears
Through the high palace halls upon
The fairy Isle of Avalon.

Gate, tower and wall and minaret,
Crowning the height whose crimson base
The placid argent wavelets fret,
Flash in the sun's outrivalled face:
Gem-fraught the sculptured mansion on
The lustrous Isle of Avalon.

The warrior, pure of heart and hand,
Whose blood hath stream'd for right oppressed,
Uplifted by a white-stoled band,
With charm of song is lulled to rest,
'Mid rosy bowers, aye, blooming on
The verdure of far Avalon.

There spring abides; but 'tis not ours
That pierces oft with winter's sting;
The tranquil sky, sweet air and flowers
Reveal the bliss old poets sing:
The golden age hath ever shone
Amid the fields of Avalon.

The balmy air with healing fraught
Dispels the host of mortal ills;
The power of death it brings to naught,
And keenest anguish quickly stills.
All sorrow he forgets anon
Who dwells in happy Avalon.

Thus Fancy paints thee now, sweet isle!
As faith of old thine image cheered;
But thoughts that gave thee birth beguile
Still countless hearts by trouble scared,
Foreseeing sorrow's phantoms wan
Fade in some joy-lit Avalon.

* Not that described by Tennyson, but in "Fairy Mythology," page 71.

CAUGHT BY A THREAD.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Bentley Wyvern left Northumberland Street, he walked to the railway station and took a ticket for Upfield; but as there was ten minutes to spare before the time fixed for the departure of the train, he entered one of the waiting-rooms and sat down. A few seconds after he saw a man's face appear on the other side of the glass door through which he had just passed. As he was the only occupant of the room, and as the face remained close to the glass panel, he became conscious that some one was attentively observing him. At length the door was pushed open and a man came in. He approached Bentley Wyvern and looked at him steadily, apparently in the hope of being recognised. Finding himself disappointed in this respect, the stranger held out his hand.

"You are mistaking me for an acquaintance of yours," said Bentley Wyvern. "I don't know you."

"Look at me again, and I dare say you'll be able to remember me."

Bentley Wyvern scrutinised the features of his interlocutor, and then hearing the bell ring for the departure of the train, rose to his feet.

"I have no recollection," he said, as he turned towards the door.

"Don't go just yet; I've something very particular to say to you."

"But I wish to leave by the train that is just about to start."

"Go by the next one."

"Who are you, and what is your business with me?"

"When I tell you my name it will refresh your memory a bit."

"Out with it then, my good fellow, for I don't believe I ever saw you before."

"My name is Porson—Thomas Porson. It's close on thirteen years since we last parted."

Bentley Wyvern carefully wrapped up his umbrella before he replied.

"It turns out exactly as I expected. You are deceived by my resemblance to some one that you formerly knew."

"What!" exclaimed Porson, in astonishment. "Do you mean to say that you're not my brother?"

"I mean to say that I am *not*."

"Oh! come that won't do, Bentley. You may have forgotten me, because I was only a boy when you left home; but you're not so changed in appearance as to prevent my recognizing you."

"I begin to perceive your object in pretending to mistake me for a brother of yours. Before I leave, you will confess your error, offer an apology, and beg me to give you some pecuniary assistance. The trick is ingenious, but it will not succeed with me."

When Bentley Wyvern had said this, he walked towards the door, but Porson quickly intercepted him.

"Don't you be in a hurry to get away till you've heard a little more of what I've got to say. I'm not an impostor. When I tell you that you were once a pupil teacher at the National School, and that your father was a small farmer, you'll at once see that I'm not trying to deceive you in any way."

"You are altogether wrong as to my parentage and everything else," said Bentley Wyvern, still endeavouring to get past Porson.

"I understand what you mean now. At first I thought you didn't believe that I was the person I represented myself to be. What you've just said shows me that you won't acknowledge your true name, which you know as well as I do is Bentley Porson. I suppose you've become too proud to acknowledge a poor man like me to be your brother. If that's your feeling the sooner you get rid of it the better, for I wouldn't exchange places with you for all the money that ever was issued from the mint."

"What do you know about my present position?" demanded Bentley Wyvern.

"A good deal more than you fancy. More than you even know yourself."

"Then you, at least, know where I live, and the business in which I am engaged?"

"Both."

Upon receiving this reply, Bentley Wyvern saw that it would be useless any longer to deny his personal identity, and formed his resolution accordingly. Taking his brother by the arm, he led him back towards the fire-place, and stopped in the full light of the gas.

"You have changed, Tom, considerably since I last saw you," he said, "so you needn't feel any surprise when I say that your face has grown quite out of my recollection."

"But you couldn't have forgotten that you were once a pupil-teacher."

"Quite true; but I thought it possible that you might be some one who had merely lived in our neighbourhood; and, as I have changed

my surname, I did not wish to admit my identity. Even now, I have no proof that you are really my brother."

"Read that letter written to me by yourself when I was a boy at school," said Porson, taking one out of his pocket.

"I no longer feel the slightest doubt of our relationship," observed Bentley Wyvern, when he had glanced at it. "But how came you to meet me here? Have you just arrived by train, or are you going away?"

"Neither. I followed you, as I have been doing since morning. Months ago I caught a glimpse of you sitting in a brougham going down Cheapside, but I thought it couldn't be you. I was toiling along with a heavy load upon my back on a broiling hot day in July, *you* were riding in a luxurious carriage and looking the picture of comfort. I said to myself at the time, if that gentleman is really my brother, what a contrast there is between us. But whoever you might be I envied you. I saw you in the same vehicle yesterday——"

"And again envied me, I suppose?"

"No, I pitied you."

"You are a very eccentric fellow, Tom," said Bentley Wyvern, smiling.

"I'm not usually thought so. Do you know why I've just made myself known to you?"

"Well, I think it's not very difficult to guess."

"Let me hear your notions on the subject?"

"In the first place, you were anxious to claim relationship with a man who keeps a carriage. In the next, you wish me to render you some assistance."

"I thought your reply would be something like that," said Porson, shaking his head. "What will you say when I tell you that the greatest trouble I have arises from your being my brother?"

"Say! Why that you are talking nonsense, Tom."

"You don't know the danger that you're in."

"What do you mean?" asked Bentley Wyvern, quickly.

"Hush! there's some one coming into the room. We can't continue our conversation here. Follow me into the street; but don't address me till we get some distance from the station."

Glancing quickly round as he left the waiting-room, Porson endeavoured to assure himself that his movements were unobserved. There were a few people standing near one of the windows, from which passengers' tickets were about to be issued, but there was nobody in the group whom he recognised as connected

with the detective police. Closely followed by his brother, he passed through the outer door, and descended the steps leading to the street. He continued his way, at a rapid pace, till he turned into York Road, and had almost reached the railway-bridge which crosses it. There Bentley Wyvern quickened his steps, and, in a low voice, called him to stop.

"I don't in the least understand this strange proceeding on your part. How far do you imagine I am going to follow you?"

Porson turned round suddenly, and confronted his brother.

"I want to avoid being seen talking to you. If the people that employ me got to know that I held any communication with you, it's quite certain they wouldn't keep me in their service an hour after. Now a railway station isn't an unlikely place to meet with persons in the same line as myself, and very probably acquainted with me. That's the reason I asked you not to say anything to me as we came out."

"Your employers must be very extraordinary people."

"Come into the shadow that's thrown by the bridge, and then we shall be less likely to be noticed by anyone passing," said Porson, getting close to the wall.

"It's a matter of supreme indifference to me whether we are seen or not."

"Ah, but it isn't so to me. I'm not going to compromise myself, if I can help it."

"Compromise yourself!" exclaimed Bentley Wyvern, looking keenly at his brother. "Have you lost your senses? Walk on to the next lamp-post, and let me examine your face."

"There's no need for that; you had a pretty good look at me a bit ago. Besides, I prefer staying where we are, unless you know of a place where what I'm going to say is less likely to be overheard. I can't go home with you, and there's a still better reason why you can't come home with me. As to public-houses, they are equally out of the question, for there's no chance in such places of getting a room to ourselves."

"Will you accompany me to an hotel, and——"

"There's the same objection to that course that there is to one or two others which might be named. I wish to run as little risk as possible of being seen in your society."

"I am exceedingly impressed with the condescension which you have already shown towards me in that respect," said Bentley Wyvern, ironically. "In order to relieve you

of any further anxiety on the subject, allow me to leave you without a moment's delay."

"No, I must detain you for a little time. I have said that you are in danger, and I repeat it," said Porson, laying his hand upon his brother's shoulder.

"In danger of what?"

"Of justice overtaking you," replied Porson, solemnly.

"Oh! you are going to lecture me upon the enormity of my offence in not writing to inform my father of my whereabouts before he died. Save yourself the trouble, young man, it will have no effect upon me; and besides that, I don't intend to waste time in listening to you."

Still keeping his hand upon the shoulder of his brother, Porson said, "I am not going to speak of *that*. I allude to your doings at Lombard Street."

In spite of his great self-command, Bentley Wyvern recoiled for a moment. There was not sufficient light to enable Porson to distinguish the expression of his brother's face; but he felt this movement.

"You understand what I mean now, Bentley. Bentley, it would have been far better for you had you remained in the country and followed your calling."

"How is it possible that you can know anything of my affairs. If I recollect rightly, you told me that you had been following me about for the last day or two. Is that the way in which you try to find out what I am doing at Lombard Street?"

"You don't suspect what my occupation is, I suppose?"

"If you hadn't spoken to me about your employers I should have thought that you were idling about London, since you have leisure enough to dog my footsteps."

"I'm paid to watch you."

"By whom?"

"By the Commissioners of Police."

"You—you—amaze me," stammered Bentley Wyvern.

The night was decidedly cold, yet he took out his handkerchief and wiped the moisture from his forehead. There was a pause of a few seconds, during which two men, happening to meet, stopped to converse within a few yards of the brothers. Porson suggested that they should go round the angle of the wall which formed one of the supports of the bridge, and he had already taken a step in that direction when Bentley Wyvern recalled him. The men had walked on together, and were soon at a sufficient distance to admit of Porson resuming the conversation.

"There's no occasion to tell you what my occupation is after what I've said, and you'll easily understand how cautious I'm obliged to be in holding any communication with you. Although I've been many years without seeing you, I still feel some affection for you," continued Porson, in broken accents. My object is to save *you* from a dreadful fate, and *me* from the disgrace of having my only brother convicted of——"

He turned away his head without finishing the sentence.

"Of what, Tom?" asked Bentley Wyvern, in a steady voice.

"Doesn't your conscience tell you?"

"I assure you that it does not," replied Bentley Wyvern, in a tone perceptibly lower than that in which he had previously spoken.

A sound as of a loose paving stone tumbling against others came from the corner near which they were standing, but passed unheeded.

"Then if you're innocent I needn't say anything more, and may let you take your chance," said Porson, desirous of ascertaining what effect this mode of treating the subject would have upon his brother.

"Believe me, I am truly sensible of the kind motives that have induced you to tell me of this extraordinary proceeding on the part of the police, and you may rely upon it that I shall not fail to show my gratitude in a very substantial form."

"I want nothing from you," said Porson, hastily.

"As you will. You must not, however, refuse to let me know what offence I am suspected to have committed, and why you of all other men should have been selected to watch me."

"What you've last mentioned was the result of accident. When I went down to Lombard Street in order that you might be pointed out to me, I hadn't the faintest idea that you would turn out to be my brother. But I recognised you in a moment. If I had felt any doubt remaining on that point it would have been soon removed, for you took off your glove to pay a cabman, and I saw as I expected, that you had lost the end of one of your fingers. The person who was with me noticed that I was a good bit excited upon seeing you, but I managed to deceive him as to the real cause. He has been very kind to me—got me employment when I was almost starving—and I wouldn't have behaved in an unhandsome way towards him on any account, except one—to save you."

"Go on," said Bentley Wyvern, swinging

his umbrella backwards and forwards with an affectation of carelessness.

"You wish me to give a name to the crime that you're believed to have committed. Suppose I were to say robbery?" said Porson, pausing for a moment.

"What proofs have they?" asked Bentley Wyvern, hurriedly.

"I said *suppose* you were accused of that. It would be bad enough, wouldn't it? But it's worse—worse than that."

"Worse!"

"It's murder!" whispered Porson, bringing his face close to the ear of his brother. A long drawn sigh escaped from the latter, and for some seconds he made no reply.

"Do you mean to tell me," he at last asked, "that anyone is fool enough to suspect that I shot Mansfield?"

"I do. And what is more, I'm in daily expectation that you'll be taken into custody. Save yourself by flight while there is yet time. There's a steamer sails from Liverpool the day after to-morrow for New York. Disguise yourself as well as you can—for there are always a detective or two on board who might have a description of you—and take your passage in her by another name."

"You regard me as guilty, I perceive."

"Don't question me on that point, Bentley. Every man has a right to be considered innocent till the contrary is proved."

"Dismiss from your mind all apprehensions on my account. I am perfectly guiltless of having caused the death of Mansfield," said Bentley Wyvern, in a firm clear voice.

"It isn't very likely that you would confess to me if you had."

"True. But fortunately I am in a position to prove that on the evening in question I was ill at home, and went to bed early."

"Don't you reckon too much upon that fact. I have had it proved to me that you could easily have left your house by way of the door in the garden, and got back again without any of the servants being aware of your absence."

"What I *could* do, and what I *did* do, are widely different. Even you must be able to comprehend that, Tom, though I know that you never had the reputation of being possessed of much brains. I am willing to admit that what you have told me has been dictated by the best of motives; but let me warn you never again to insinuate that I am capable of committing such an act as you say is imputed to me. As to the advice that you have given me about going to America, I shall take particular care not to follow it. Let the police, if they are so

disposed, watch my movements as long as they like. They dare not arrest me without being provided with some evidence to justify such a proceeding, and I *know* the utter impossibility of their obtaining any such evidence."

"I'm glad to hear you say so, for your own sake," remarked Porson, looking doubtfully at his brother.

"It's getting late, and therefore I think we had better part, Tom. When you wish to communicate with me, send a letter to Upfield. Meantime, give me your address."

"Hanging Sword Alley, No. 7. Remember, however, I don't wish it known that I've been putting you on your guard."

"My good fellow, the whole thing is an absurdity, as, I have no doubt, you will discover some day. All I ask you to do is, not to let anyone know that my real name isn't Wyvern. In return I am willing to give you some pecuniary assistance, as soon as you choose to apply for it."

He coldly shook hands with Porson, and left him standing under the railway bridge.

CHAPTER VII.

SIR CHARLES PENNINGTON'S case had been placed in the hands of Messrs. Hickory, Hickory, & Blade. That eminent firm had been selected chiefly because the attorney who had acted for the baronet's father showed a marked disinclination to take any steps in the matter without being first paid a considerable sum on account of the heavy costs likely to be incurred. Sir Charles had therefore been introduced to Messrs. Hickory, Hickory, & Blade, who undertook the care of his interests upon condition that he obtained the guarantee of a certain relative of the senior partner. Acting upon the advice of Mr. Bentley Wyvern, the baronet, without asking for an explanation of this curious stipulation, had called upon the gentleman referred to—a wine merchant at the West End—and had found no difficulty in entering into an arrangement with him, whereby, in return for the baronet's acceptances, amounting to a very large sum, the required surety was obtained. Messrs. Hickory, Hickory, & Blade, having the fear of the Master of the Rolls before their eyes, had been driven to this contrivance in order to secure to themselves some thousands of pounds beyond their legitimate costs. Having so much at stake upon the issue, it will readily be anticipated that they took every necessary precaution to insure success. Sir Charles still continued to reside at the Old Hall, as he found it much more

conveniently situated with regard to the rectory than his lodgings in Piccadilly. Having received a letter from his solicitors, in which they expressed themselves in the most sanguine terms as to the certainty of his claim being admitted by the Committee of Prerogatives, he was in the highest spirits when he presented himself one evening at Mr. Clare's house. Much to his satisfaction, he found Florence alone. She was sitting in a comfortable little room, with a cheerful fire blazing upon the hearth. The thermometer stood at freezing-point without, but thick window-curtains and a *portière* prevented any current of cold air from penetrating into this apartment. In the arrangement of the flowers, books, and drawings, there was that indescribable charm which can alone be imparted by the hand of a woman of refinement. It was here that Mary spent much of her time. In fact, the room was almost exclusively set apart for the use of the sisters.

Florence welcomed Sir Charles somewhat languidly, and soon after bent her eyes on the book that she held in her hand.

"I suppose that's something very interesting which you are reading," said the baronet, looking rather discontented.

"Not particularly so. It is Tennyson's 'Locksley Hall.'"

"Oh, ah! Poetry isn't it?"

"I never heard anyone dispute its being so," she replied, smiling.

"When I was at Rugby I tried to write some verses myself, and managed the rhyme very well; but they told me I made an awful mess of the rhythm.

"What was the subject that inspired you?"

"I can hardly tell you. It was something about the pleasure of hunting."

She turned over a leaf of the book and read aloud :

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have
spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than
his horse.

"That's very good in its way, no doubt, but I hope you don't think the lines apply to me," he said, looking at her uneasily.

"No. It was merely a passing fancy that made me read them."

"Do you know, Florence, I sometimes think that you don't love me," he said, after a minute's silence.

She closed the book and looked up at him in surprise.

"You appear not to take so much pleasure in my society," he continued, "as you did a few weeks ago."

"What a ridiculous idea!" she exclaimed, laughing. "I love you quite as much as I ever did."

"Is that really so?" he asked, as his face brightened.

"Of course it is, you silly fellow. By-the-bye, I have omitted to thank you for the bracelet you sent me this morning. It is very pretty."

"I am glad you like it, but it's not such a one as I should have given had— However, you shall have a *parure* of diamonds ere many months elapse. And now I am going to make a trial of your love."

"Indeed!"

"I wish you, dearest, to become my wife next month."

"But, Charles, your affairs will not be settled by that time."

"What affairs?"

"Your—your peerage, and all that," she answered, her face suffused with crimson.

"They will be quite sufficiently arranged to admit of my marrying you. It's true that we shan't be able to spend the honeymoon at Thorpe Castle, but I can hardly suppose you will consider *that* a matter of much importance. I have set my heart upon the wedding taking place before I am acknowledged to be Lord Bideford, and therefore I am sure you will not refuse what I ask."

"Papa would not agree to what you propose," she said, hanging down her head.

"I will undertake to obtain his consent before I leave to-night. Will you give me yours?" he said, bending over her and taking her hand.

"There is not sufficient time to enable me to make the necessary preparations," she replied.

"Is that your only objection, Florence?" he said.

There was something in the tone of his voice, as he put this question, which warned her that he had a misgiving as to the real motive that induced her to hesitate.

"Let it be as you wish," she murmured; "but remember that you must obtain papa's consent."

"There will be no difficulty about that; and as I know he is now alone in his study, I will go to him at once."

TABLE TALK.

WE ARE REMINDED of the existence of a very bold and iconoclastic spirit amongst our American friends by an article that appeared lately in the *New York Herald*. That paper, which is not only in advance of the age, but considerably ahead of American journalism, publishes a leader, headed, "A Coming Scientific Cataclysm," in which it reviews a new work on "The Planetary Universe," written by "the accomplished astronomer Dr. Trastour de Varano." The conclusions at which this gentleman has arrived are startling, if not positively alarming. The *Herald* says:—"This work declares nothing less than that our entire accepted system of astronomy is erroneous. The work upon its appearance will undoubtedly encounter a desperate opposition from the old school, and a furious war will certainly be waged against it by most professional astronomers." It "touches upon questions of vital interest, and is destined on that account to create a serious commotion among scientific men, and to materially change many of our preconceived notions. It is the first gun-shot of a new school against old existing institutions." Then follow at length the conclusions of Dr. Varano on matters astronomical. We venture to quote one or two of the most important to ourselves. They take the form of a protest against received opinions. This is the first:—"Contrary to the teachings of the system of Copernicus, the only one that now gives law to astronomy, the sun is not placed in the centre of the planetary system, and the earth and the planets do not revolve annually around that luminary." Dr. Varano then hurls three or four sentences at the doctrines of Ptolemy, Tycho Brahe and Kepler, and proceeds:—"Contrary to their doctrine, the moon does not revolve around the earth while the latter is said to revolve around the sun. Contrary to their doctrine, the earth, the moon and the planets pursue their course continually in the plane of the ecliptic and never go out of it." Also that:—"There is never a year of duration equal to the one that preceded or follows it." Newton's theory of gravitation is the last matter dealt with in the Doctor's list of protests; of this he says:—"Contrary to their doctrine, Newton's theory of gravitation offers neither evidence nor probability. It is a fantastic commentary, built upon the chimerical ideas of Kepler, radically foreign to all mathematical truth, and

even transgressing the limits of common sense Newton stepped beyond the sphere of the difficult only to enter into impossibilities." Dr. Varano's statements of his discoveries and beliefs are very amusing, but they are not very new. For years past an individual has, under the title of "Parallax," been in the habit of raising a feeble excitement in the provinces, by lecturing and getting up a discussion afterwards, upon precisely similar theories to those put forward by the American astronomer. There was usually a collection after the lectures. We will make one more quotation. Dr. Varano predicts that the sun will in time acquire the habit of rising in the west. He says:—"Contrary to their doctrine, at a future day the sun, the planets, the moon and the stars will rise in the west and set in the east." For the information of such of our readers as may be anxious to know when this revolution in the sun's course of conduct will occur, we may mention that Dr. Varano, who was formerly State Geologist of Louisiana, U. S., is now settled in Nicaragua, Central America.

THAT excellent serial of the Religious Tract Society, *The Cottager*, in its number for January, gives a portrait of the Queen; and, in the letterpress thereto, quotes from a speech of the Rev. Dr. Brock, who narrated an anecdote of a Norfolk farmer, who presented to her Majesty some of his poetical effusions, which she graciously accepted. "I will not answer for the versification," said Dr. Brock, "but I know that it was thoroughly steeped with right evangelical loyalty." As a curious species of loyalty, hitherto unheard of, this seems to be worthy of mention.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT are complaining of the amount of time unnecessarily wasted in the House. Session after session passes and there is always a considerable arrear of work. Perhaps there is rather more "talk" on certain occasions than is needed in the public service. Some honourable gentlemen who figure very prominently in making fun for the House might with safety apply to their cloquence Queen Gertrude's advice to Polonius to give "more matter," though it might be difficult to do so "with less art," than they now do. However, let us be thankful for the many able and disinterested public men we possess. But surely something can be done to save the time now wasted on divisions, without going so far as to adopt the electric dial system of registering votes. The members may do a great deal to remedy the evil themselves. It is too bad

at a crowded after-dinner division for an honourable member, when asked for his name by the clerk in the lobby, to reply "my name is Norval." If founded in fact one is almost tempted to wish his father had been successful in keeping him "at home." A correspondent of the *Times* upon this subject states, that this has, within his experience, been the answer given by a member to the clerk's question.

A GENERAL IDEA holds ground that large heads mean large intellects, that weight of brain indicates mental strength. But the notion is a false one: one fact will disprove it. Man is inferior to some apes in the proportion which his brain bears to his body. When we come to animals the differences are very striking. A continental physiologist has been gauging the skulls of various quadrupeds, and weighing their contents. There are beasts whose instinct approaches to reason, and we style such intelligent; their high instinct is not however commensurable with their cerebral developments. To range a few of the commonest animals in the order of brain weights, we have the following declining scales:—cat, dog, rabbit, sheep, ass, pig, horse, and ox. The two last have the same weight of nerve centre in proportion to the capacity of their bodies, but they have only a sixth part that of the first on the list; that is to say, the cat has six times as much brain in proportion to her size as the horse has in proportion to his size. The pig has more than the horse, the sheep more than the pig. Who would have thought it? Evidently there are brains and brains. The facts almost set us wondering whether the brain has anything to do with the intellect at all. A systematic measurement of the cere-brine matter of wise and foolish men is a thing to be desired.

AMONG the pictures now on view at the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy—which will close at the end of February—is Holbein's portrait of Edward VI., lent by the Duke of Northumberland. Another version of this picture was shown by the Earl of Yarborough, at the National Portrait Exhibition, 1866. Attention may also be called to another portrait of Edward VI., an ancient picture of much merit, and apparently authentic, which hangs in the building now known as "the Chantry," adjoining the parish church of Kidderminster. This building was, till recently, the Free Grammar School; but it was originally built for a chantry, about the year 1300, by one Simon Ryse. Edward VI.,

however, abolished the chantry and established the grammar-school in its place; and his portrait was, probably, placed there in commemoration of that circumstance. It has hung there, or in the vestry, from time immemorial, and it deserves a careful inspection by competent judges.

WHY DO WE NOT GROW our own sugar? Not our own sugar-cane, but our own beet-root. There is no apparent reason why our agriculturists should be behind those of the Continent in this particular branch of industry. Our climate is fit for the vegetable, our soils could with existing knowledge of scientific tillage easily be adapted to it. Our labourers could be taught the manufacturing operations for converting the sugar. The *Chemical News* says there are 1184 beet-sugar works on the Continent of Europe; it does not tell us of one in England. The total produce of these is about four and a half million cwts. of sugar annually. Upon the average, about four thousand pounds is obtained from 500 cwts. of beet, and this quantity is the yield of a hectare of land, about two and a half acres. The refuse left after the sugar is extracted is available as food for cattle, and it is even better than the roots specially cultivated for this purpose. It is also in great demand for the manufacture of paper. The molasses are also used up with fodder, for they are not fit for sweetening on account of the mineral salts they contain; a spirit is of course obtainable therefrom, but it is not so agreeable to the palate as to cause apprehensions lest another intoxicating liquor should be put within easy reach of thirsty souls. Altogether beet-root sugar-making would be a desirable addition to our home industry.

ERRATUM: in our last number, on page 41, *antedecedentem* was printed in mistake, *antedecedentum*.

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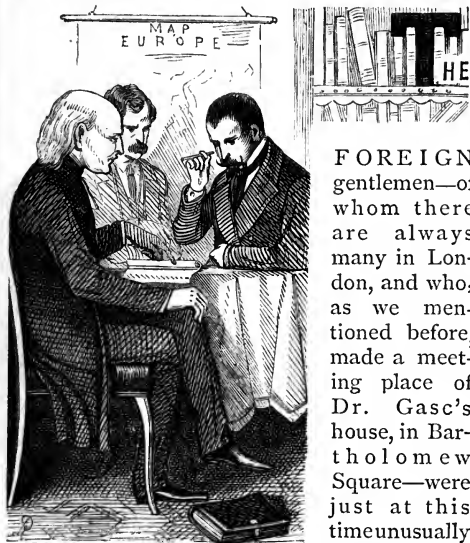
THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PATRIOTS IN CONFERENCE.



FOREIGN gentlemen—of whom there are always many in London, and who, as we mentioned before, made a meeting place of Dr. Gasc's house, in Bartholomew Square—were just at this time unusually active and on

the alert, even for them. They met and conferred again and again, sitting round the doctor's dining-room table, puffing away at their cigarettes and poring over the map of Europe, with every line of which they were as familiar as with their own sallow physiognomies. Lavelle was their chairman, or president, or whatever they were pleased to call their leading spirit. His associates in all this weighty business were not men of one nation; but among them could claim a very varied nationality. They were Frenchmen, they were Italians, they were Poles, they were Hungarians. But to what nation soever they

belonged, they had a common grievance—against all the existing forms of government: and a common cause—Freedom, Equality, Fraternity.

The Doctor was not often persuaded to be of their party: he found house-room for intrigue, and wisely thought that enough. When he did join in their councils, they usually met him in his own room, which was large for a study and rather small for a library, but partook somewhat of the character of both. It was a long and very narrow room, looking out upon the garden, towards which were two tall windows. The air of this sanctum of the good Doctor's always had a stuffy and all-pervading odour of mouldy books and preserved specimens about it, which hung about the curtains and hangings of the windows, and was pretty nearly ventilation proof. It was a gloomy room, likely to induce fear in the young, and melancholy in the old. Regy was always in his young days afraid of entering it in the dark. The skeleton of a man, with bleached bones and grinning jaws, hung from the top of a worm-eaten case, placed in a recess between the windows, suggesting to Master Reginald—Death and the Horrible. The bones of some pre-historic bird—the mammoth growth of by-gone cycles—wired together with scientific skill, were mounted on a wooden stand at one end of the Doctor's apartment: at the other, a stuffed seal, was similarly exalted. As for the walls, where there were not glazed cases, filled with specimens, phials, and fossils, there were bookshelves, full, for the most part, of dingy old calf-bound volumes: and where there were no bookshelves, there were the glass cases. Above them, again, fastened tight to the walls, were fragments of rare fossils—mastodons, iguanodons, and others—in which the Doctor only took any interest. He was very fond of them, and very proud of them: but was it to be expected that the Patriots, with the living map of Enrope before them, should care anything for the footprints of the Dodo, or for the fossil tooth of the mightiest mastodon that ever shook his pachydermatous

hide on the banks of waters that were dried up long before the Flood?

The day on which Reginald made his first acquaintance with the outer world in the shape of Mr. Strongi'th'arm's very ill-regulated academy of young gentlemen, happened to be quite a field day with the patriots. Two of their fraternity—an Italian named Pietro, and Monsieur Schneider, a Frenchman—emissaries, and friends to the cause of liberty, had recently come back to London, after a grand insurrectionary tour through Europe; and what with the news they brought, and the schemes they proposed, there was much business to be done.

Lavelle had begged the doctor to assist at the conference, and he had given a reluctant consent. He and his friends were seated at their board of green cloth, on which were piles of papers, letters, and documents. Father Francis with the map before him, was talking with much animation to Signor Pietro, their Italian ambassador; the others were listening with the greatest interest and attention to the conversation of their leaders; with the single exception of their host, the good Doctor, who immensely preferred the study of his favourite bones and fossils to the construction of amended maps of Europe and his geology to their revolutions.

We have no concern, however, with their plots and revolutionary schemes, except as far as they affected the fortunes of the Good Uncle, who, indeed, himself was innocent of any but the most passive complicity with their designs.

"I tell you, Messieurs," said the Italian, when Lavelle had finished speaking, "and when Pietro prophesies you will hear him; I tell you it cannot last. The house divided against itself falls. The system is a sham: it is exploded. I could puff it away as I puff away this," said the signor, taking a long suck at his cigar, and then sending the smoke in widening blue circles towards the ceiling. "It is but natural, and follows the laws that govern such things. France is ripe for action. Paris is in arms. Fieschi failed—but think of the affair of October! The people cry '*Vive la Réforme!*' The word is magic, it spreads like fire among the crowd. The old cry rouses the enthusiasm of the people. Wait, wait—not long, and the kingdom shall be a republic. Pietro says it—Wait for Napoleon."

"*Vive la Réforme!*" cried some of the patriots, in response to Pietro's words.

"It must come," the Italian continued, "the country is ripe for action: we have funds, we

have leaders: Europe groans under tyranny and oppression. France calls for reform, social, political: and France has reformers equal to her need."

"Pietro!" murmured an ardent admirer.

"No, no, my friends; Pietro is for Italy. France has her Pietros. To-day, and yesterday, and to-morrow, about the Madeleine—on the Rue Royale—the cry is, '*Vive la Réforme! à bas les ministres!*' That shout shall be echoed throughout France—through all Europe. That reform is at hand."

And the Italian's restless black eyes sparkled with fire as he uttered his prophecy, striking the table at the same time a blow with his hand that made the glass cases rattle.

"Have the calls for funds been answered as we expected?" asked one of his hearers.

"Yes," replied Pietro, "they have, with liberality and promptitude. My countrymen," he added, with undisguised pride, "contribute their share. It will be our turn next, my friends, to ask of you; for, by the snow-capped Alps, by the bright blue sky over my own Naples, there is a future yet for a united Italy."

"I hope so—I hope so!" sighed Lavelle, with fervour.

There was a general expression of applause among the company when Pietro had finished speaking. There was, however, one person at the table who had not heard a word of what the Italian said. This was the Doctor, who sat gazing abstractedly at the fossils on the wall opposite him; but his mind was not absorbed in any abstruse geological speculation; he was simply thinking of Reginald, and how he was getting on with the boys at school. About this time Dr. Gasc thought of Reginald a great deal. It was not the buzz of conversation that followed Pietro's speech that aroused him now from his reverie. Victor, his old servant, had gently tapped him two or three times on the shoulder before he felt the touch.

"A gentleman has called and desires to see you, M'sieur," said Victor to the Doctor, handing him a card.

"Say I will come down immediately."

Dr. Gasc expected a visitor.

There was at the back of the dining-room a little parlour in which the Doctor often sat: in this room he saw his visitor.

Dr. Gasc had been closeted in the parlour for about half an hour, when Master Reginald came running back from school. His first impulse, when old Victor opened the door for him, was to rush in to the Good Uncle's study

and tell him all about his first day at school : accordingly he bounded up-stairs, and opening the door found the room occupied by Father Francis and the patriots. Not seeing the Doctor there, he ran down-stairs to the dining-room ; finding that empty, he was in an instant at the door of the little parlour behind it. Here he found, however, an unexpected obstacle in his way in the person of Madam McCara, who stood with her back resolutely wedged against the door and held her finger to her lips to enjoin silence upon Regy.

"Your Uncle is engaged, my boy," she whispered, as Reginald pushed past her. "You must wait. There is a gentleman with him."

Madam's advice, however, came too late, for before she could finish her sentence, Reginald had opened the door, and burst into the room, with Madam at his heels, holding on to his coat, and about to pull him back again. The Doctor—who seemed ruffled—and his visitor had risen from their seats, and were standing near the door, when the two intruders entered.

"He would come in," said Madam McCara, apologetically.

"He is always to come to me if he wishes," said the Doctor, taking Regy under his arm and stroking his hair mechanically.

On hearing this Madam at once withdrew.

"Well, Dr. Gasc," said the stranger, "you have heard my opinion and you have had my offer, and you have chosen to reject it."

"Quite true, Monsieur."

"I shall not act in a summary manner, as perhaps I ought," continued his visitor, "and say at once that I saddle you with all future responsibility——"

"As Monsieur well knows, I have had all the past," the Doctor interrupted.

Of this interruption the stranger took no notice, but proceeded quietly to finish his sentence.

"I shall give you time, Dr. Gasc, to consider my proposals, which I am sure are the best in the interests of all parties concerned that can be made. I shall give you time—weeks, possibly months—to consider them. When you tell me your decision it will be time enough for me to tell you my final intentions in the matter. I may permit you to assume all charge and responsibility if you still reject my plans. I may choose to assert my natural rights——"

"Don't—don't talk of nature, Monsieur," said the Doctor, raising his hand, and looking more angry than Reginald had ever seen him before.

"Well, well, Dr. Gasc, I have nothing further to say now. I will wish you a good afternoon."

"As Monsieur pleases," said the Doctor, pulling the bell.

The gentleman for whom Victor opened the door of the Doctor's house was Robert Mortimer.

Directly he was gone the Doctor gave Regy an affectionate hug, and something like a tear fell on the boy's little coat. In a minute the Good Uncle smiled, and was himself again ; and sitting down in his chair, with Regy at his side, bade him tell him all about his first day at Mr. Strong's academy, and very much he laughed at the boy's description of the Dominie and his family.

"One of the boys said to me, 'Who is your father?'" said Reginald.

"Well, my boy?" replied the Doctor, gravely.

"Well—who is my father, Uncle?" asked the boy, looking steadily into Dr. Gasc's grey eyes.

After a momentary pause, the Doctor said, "God, my son, is your father. God in Heaven is my Regy's father. His earthly father is— is dead."

Now, the boy paused before he put another question to the Good Uncle.

"My mother, I know, is dead, for Father Francis often says, 'Think of your mother in Heaven'; but he never says think of your father. I suppose my father must—be with my mother, Uncle."

The Good Uncle smiled—but sadly—as he looked at the bright face of his adopted son.

"I suppose so, too, my boy," he said.

"Who was my father?" pursued Reginald.

"An officer, my boy—a brave man. If the boys ask you, say an officer who was killed in the wars—killed before you were born."

"I will be a soldier when I'm a man, Uncle," said Regy, striking a pretty military attitude, and looking up at the Doctor.

"I hope not, my boy: you must fight for a better cause, and in a better way: bloodless battles you shall wage, my brave Reginald. Come," he added, rising, "go tell Madam all about the Dominie and 'impudence and ignorance,' and the stiff pudding. I am going upstairs to Father Francis again."

Master Regy found Madam very anxious to hear all about his new experiences—of which by the way, she did not at all approve—and the boy mimicked the Dominie and his family for her amusement till she was almost reconciled to the place.

When the Doctor rejoined the patriots in his own peculiar sanctum, he found them pretty much where he had left them in the matter of results : they had talked a great deal and done a very little.

"Ah ! here is the Count," cried one of these gentlemen, as Dr. Gasc entered the room. "You have been a long time absent, Count de Gasc," he said. "Monsieur Schneider gives us a grand account of the funds at their disposal in Paris."

"Who holds the money ?" asked one of the company.

"We have more bankers than one," replied Pietro to this question. "All our forces are not trusted to one bottom, nor all our eggs sent to market in one basket. Justin has some of our money, and there is some in London ; and again, Descamps still holds a little."

"Ah !" said Dr. Gasc, "Descamps—I know Descamps."

"It is an old house enough," said Schneider.

"Yes, yes," replied the Doctor ; "old, old and safe—my family banked with Descamps Frères always. When I got my little fortune it was in Descamps' hands, and I have not cared to move it."

When the conference was over and the revolutionists were taking their leave, Monsieur Schneider whispered in Dr. Gasc's ear,—

"English funds are safe."

"Eh ?" said the Doctor.

"English funds are safe. Safer than French bankers."

"Yes."

"Well, my dear Count," and Monsieur shrugged his shoulders and lowered his voice, "*if I had money I think I might take it from Descamps'. That bank totters.* Adieu, my dear friend, that is all ; adieu."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DOCTOR'S RESOLVE.

SO the months ran on, and that bright-eyed, stout-limbed boy, Reginald Erle, our hero, grew and thrived in the house of the good Doctor, in Bartholomew Square. Beloved by all the little household, and brightening the old red brick house by his presence, like sunbeams in spring, Master Regy was getting spoiled apace by the Good Uncle and Madam and Father Francis, who bid one against the other for his highness's favour. And sometimes Lavelle and sometimes Madam stood before each other in Regy's good opinion ; but for the Good Uncle was always

kept the warmest place in his young heart. He had from childhood a most evenly good temper, resulting, very likely, from sound bodily health. Regy was robust enough, and got safely through the ailments of children—measles and such like complaints—with mighty little trouble to himself or Madam. His stomach was a strong one, and so his digestive organs were not easily discomposed. One day when, late in autumn, the aged pear-tree in the garden was stripped by old Victor and Master Reginald—who had holiday from school for that purpose—of its crop of fruit, which was of the hard, never ripe sort, called "stone pears," a dish of this indigestible fruit was placed on a shelf in Victor's pantry. Very likely it was Madam's intention to stew them, or bake them ; but being within Master Regy's reach, and having doubtless had a few surreptitious bites during the stripping of the tree, the urchin, in the course of one short hour, emptied the dish, taking the hard, tasteless things one by one ; and so strong was his stomach that he did not suffer any pain or punishment in consequence of the hazardous experiment.

"Where are all those pears, sorr ?" Madam demanded, in a great fright.

"What pears, Madam ?" said Regy, his eyes twinkling with mischief.

"Why, you know, sorr, the dish of pears I put in Victor's pantry," said Madam.

"Eaten," said Regy.

"You have not eaten a whole dish of hard pears !" cried Madam, in horror.

"Yes, Madam, I have," was Regy's reply.

Madam was terrified beyond measure, and dragged the boy up-stairs to the Doctor ; and was for giving him castor-oil and five or six other remedial drugs in successive doses, had not the Doctor quietly seated Regy by his side, and told Madam to come presently and see how he was going on, before she adopted such violent measures.

It was after Reginald had been some months at the Dominie's—and he only stayed there a year—that he had his first fight ; once before he had come home slightly scratched, but this had been attributed to a fall, and passed over without remark by Madam or anybody, except old Victor, to whom Regy had confided the fullest particulars of his encounter : he had been siding with Frank Brewster in some of his quarrels—for Frank was a notable fighter, often against long odds—and between the two boys there had been from their first acquaintance a very close friendship. So that affair passed over without notice : though if Regy

had been questioned it would have all come out, for he always told the truth, and all the truth, and this habit stuck to him through life.

His first pitched battle, a regular hard fought encounter, and with a boy bigger than himself, for at that age he loved a "foeman worthy of his steel," took place just at the close of his first half. The prospect of the approaching holidays and consequent separation for some weeks made Mr. Strongi'th'arm's boys unusually pugnacious, and disposed to wage war upon one another on the slightest provocation imaginable.

He returned home from the encounter with his nose very much swollen, one eye very sore, and his lip sadly cut, and his limbs pretty generally stiff and bruised from his tumbles on the gravel of the Dominie's playground.

However, Brewster, who was two years older and acted as his mentor in such matters, said he had acquitted himself to his satisfaction, and Regy was comforted thereat, and not disposed to make any fuss about his wounds. He held his handkerchief to his face, and directly Victor let him in, crept softly to his chamber; but Madam's quick eye was on the alert, and almost directly after, she caught old Victor creeping gently up after him with a supply of warm water, and a little scrap of raw beef for the black eye. Madam guessed there was something the matter, and followed herself, taking Father Francis with her. When they reached the young gentleman's room, Victor was bathing the damaged nose with a sponge and warm water.

"Oh! Regy, Regy, what have you been doing? Look at his poor face, Father Francis," cried Madam.

"I've been—having—a fight," said Reginald, smiling through his bruises, the intervals between his words being filled by applications of old Victor's sponge.

"And fighting about what?" demanded Father Francis.

"Yes, sorr, tell us this instant," said Madam.

And then it came out that the young monkey had been fighting a battle in the playground for the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome against a hard-headed Protestant champion in the shape of a youthful Scotch presbyterian. This confession atoned for all faults at once, and so it came about that the two good Catholics bathed their little knight's wounds, and poured in the balm and oil of consolation with no sparing hands.

The boy had not yet forgotten the early

teaching of Father Francis, and was mightily jealous of the honour of the old Religion.

So Madam and her director nursed their wounded champion and got him round in a day or two, doing their best to keep the affair from the Doctor's knowledge altogether. He had been the champion of the good cause, they thought, and loved him the more in their hearts for it, giving him surreptitious supplies of pocket money, and spoiling him in all ways for ever so long after.

These trifling recollections of our hero's childhood; of his appetite for hard pears and of his capacity for digesting them; of his prowess in battle, we relate because they show he was strong, and courageous enough to fight for an idea. It must not be thought that he often fought; on the contrary, his disposition was always peaceable, and the lion was only raised on great provocation. He loved books, loved to go into one of the deep windows in the Doctor's study, and stow himself away there, only looking up now and then from his volume to gaze on the Good Uncle's placid face. Yet he had not the slightest pretensions to any precocity of talent. The books he liked best at this time were "Robinson Crusoe," "Fairy Tales," and "Don Quixote," and for this last he ever retained a devoted regard. His pleasures were plentiful enough: a good boisterous game of fun at the Dominie's he loved with all his heart. A ride on his pony in the park, with old Victor as his faithful attendant; a drive with the Good Uncle in his carriage; a walk with Father Francis; a turn of shopping with Madam; or a long and confidential chat on various boyish projects with his friend Brewster, all gave him delight. And day by day he was more fondly loved by the good Doctor, whose benevolent heart found in his adopted child more than a son.

When, in pursuance of his intention announced at the end of our last chapter, Robert Mortimer called again at Bartholomew Square, the Doctor's answer may be easily conjectured. Mortimer's proposal was briefly this:—He desired that Reginald should be brought up to some occupation that would from its nature keep him permanently away from England. He had taken a false step, and he was angry with himself in consequence. At first he would gladly have seen the boy die with his unfortunate mother. But the shears of Life and Death were not guided by the hand of Robert Mortimer: the boy lived; and Mortimer was not the man to put him out of the way by a great crime: though he would not have had a moment's hesitation about a little

one. So he neglected the boy; and, after a silence for the space of three years, was very angry to find that Dr. Gasc had taken him from Mrs. Grafton, and given her a handsome recompense for her care of the orphan. If he could have starved in the streets, or have been sent to the Foundling, Robert Mortimer would have rejoiced. Again, he was angry that Dr. Gasc always refused to let him leave the shelter of his home for the doubtful advantage of Robert Mortimer's care.

The meeting of the two men was not a pleasant one. The Doctor announced his steady purpose to treat Reginald as his adopted son, to cherish him, nurture him and provide for him: that nothing short of absolute compulsion should ever, then or thereafter, induce him to let the boy go forth from his protection. Dr. Gasc was calm, but perfectly firm in his purpose. Mortimer was enraged, and used stronger language than we shall repeat; then he changed his mood, and entreated. But angry or servile, the good Doctor was unmoved in his resolve.

Robert Mortimer left the house with a threat. But there were reasons why he did not dare to exert what he called his legal rights.

Publicity might mean the ruin of his hopes.

MILITARY INDOPHOBIA.

THE French expressions *Anglomanie* and *Anglophobie* are very forcible modes of indicating two phases of feeling which are not uncommon among Frenchmen. The former (*Anglomanie*) is sometimes, we believe, perverted into doing duty for the latter; but, in its integrity, we take it to mean that undue aping of English manners and English tastes which finds vent more especially among the sporting youth of France; while *Anglophobie* is a distinguishing characteristic of the *ancien régime* and the mourners over the past glories of the First Empire. Applied to India, the latter of these terms, *mutatis mutandis*, expresses exactly the unreasoning, undefined dislike which is felt by many—we might even say, by the majority—of the youth of Her Majesty's British Army to serving their tour of duty in India. When and how this intense dislike first originated is immaterial; the fact remains, that it is bitter, irrational, and seems incapable of eradication. It, moreover, has on its side the dignity of traditional endowment. It seems to be a legacy transmitted by the past generation of the British Army, and its intensity is jealously fostered by

the present and religiously transmitted to the rising generation. Above all things, it is the fashion—and fashion is a cruel tyrant. Accordingly, everybody says life in India is monstrous—an imprisonment—a banishment—a penal servitude. Every inconvenience, every *contretemps*, can only be dealt with by superlatives. It is not only a hot country, or a comparatively hot country, but the hottest country in the world. Judge these railers by their superlative condemnations, and you would say, the unhealthiest, the ugliest, the slowest, and finally, the most abominable country in the world. And the inhabitants—they are worse than the country, if that be possible. It is almost impossible to do justice to the abysmal depth of iniquity to which they have sunk. Whatever excellence they have is a supremacy in vice, in folly, and in meanness. To a man who reflects upon the virulence of this dislike, which is epidemic to such an extent among young men—in other respects rational enough—it is very strange; but he is forced to relinquish analysis of the origin of the disease, and is only too glad to get a quiet life by acquiescence in their views, or the strictest reticence when the ever-recurring topic develops itself for discussion.

Not many years ago this unfortunate India enjoyed a yet more generally unfavourable reputation. On the *omne ignotum, nefandum* principle, it was invested with many horrors to which it could lay no claim. Lately it has become a little less of a *terra incognita*; and a fuller and more intimate acquaintance has dispelled some of its romance, its obscurity, and strangeness. Its lights and shades are less vivid. The bright gold has faded into dimmer tints, and the sombre black hues of mystery have resolved themselves into dull sepia on closer investigation. The pagoda-tree—the cherished symbol with novelists to shadow forth the plethora of wealth which, according to them, was the inevitable characteristic of a sojourner in golden India—has become one of the extinct species. A few years ago it was in the constant habit of showering down wealth untold from its overladen branches; now each bough is withered, and the most greedy snatcher would fail to secure the most meagre of golden harvests. In the place of the golden shower, no substitute has been found. An Anglo-Indian is now sometimes introduced into a novel, without any absolute necessity being found for his being called a nabob (the author, of course, not knowing the meaning of the term, except in the vaguest way). There is a probability, but

still no certainty, that he should be sun-dried, sallow, liver-diseased—and, if not dissolute, possessed, at least, of a very cosmopolitan laxity of opinion. These distinctions will, however, become more rarely observed; and, we presume, they will, eventually, fade away entirely, and it will become the exception for novelists to stigmatize the Anglo-Indian with any typical immorality or abnormal complexional peculiarity. The Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers struck a first blow at that established doctrine; the Egyptian railway aided and abetted; the Indo-European Telegraph and Weekly Mail Packet joined in the conspiracy; and M. Lesseps has struggled energetically to cut away the ground still further from under its feet. Again, the Indian government are in the league, and have very lately afforded their officers such liberal opportunities for visiting England on leave, that the barrier of remoteness and isolation is almost finally removed. When the San Franciscan Air Steamer Company shall have established their patent aeronautic locomotive cars, there will be nothing left to be desired, and the distinctions of former days will become a memory consigned to the same oblivion as the pagoda-tree and its metallic shower. Still, everybody says India is a desperately bad place to live in. Listen to them, and you would conceive that it was always hot—not hot as the Saxon knows heat—but parching hot, blasting hot, with the intensity of an oven and the glare of a furnace. They ignore, with malice prepense, any account of the rainy and cold seasons; and, if reminded, contest the propriety of their being brought into consideration; or if that be allowed, they would represent that little was to be gained by so doing. If it is not very hot in the rainy season, it never rains but it pours, and the country gets under water. When the rain stops, a state of steam-bath supervenes. The reign of insects becomes tyrannous—the plagues of Egypt are re-enacted. Flies of every variety and size—graceful, grotesque, hideous, buzzing, stinging, odour-discharging—positively oppress the air. A swarm of frogs invades every apartment, and the Egyptian enchanters seem to have transformed all their divining rods into deadly snakes: and so on.

Well! and what of the cold weather? There isn't much to say against that. It is a well established fact that over a very large proportion of India the climate is almost unsurpassable in its bright elastic freshness, and general healthiness. Still, they contrive to adopt an injured tone in respect to it also. "It

is so short it hardly deserves consideration." "It's hardly cold," they say, "before it gets hot again; and then, at the best of times, the sun is always hot."

Still these wretched mortals doomed to pass their lives, or a portion of them, in utter unhappiness, somehow or other manage to enjoy themselves very tolerably; or, speaking more accurately, *appear* to enjoy themselves very tolerably. It would be a reflection on them to say positively that they do enjoy themselves; but they keep up a good appearance, and if it were not that their tongues were ever busy with a Jeremiad against the country, no observer would suppose they were such unfortunate creatures, as they considered, and hoped, and insisted that they were.

Poor fellows! You should see them in cold weather, these young warriors of England, with their high spirits and sturdy Saxon frames. A pretty tale of sorrow the snipe must have to tell their comrades whom they rejoin in the summer in their northern homes. And the duck, the teal, sand-grouse and quail must all peel the note of war; grief must take up an eternal habitation in the haunts of the partridge, the hare, the bustard, and the antelope, as each week adds to the long list of casualties; and if the tiger, the bear, and the elephant could speak, many a vow of vengeance they would utter; and what a heart-rending dirge would the widowed does chant for slaughtered lords stricken in the glory of their antlered stateliness and matchless symmetry. And who does this? Who causes this mortality among bird and beast? Only these miserable unhappy Anglo-Saxon youths, and right royally they enjoy themselves while doing it, and none the less does it debar them from hunting, racing, cricket, balls, and other of their home amusements.

Still, when he is out shooting he thinks of the 12th August, or the 1st September at home, and sighs because he cannot be there also; and he damns the necessity which imprisons him in India; and as he says it his heart is bounding in joyous appreciation of the sport he is having.

If he be hunting, he regrets the large fields and stiff fences of Leicestershire, though Leicestershire would have nothing to say to him, poverty-stricken mortal that he is, if he *were* at home. And the racing—what wouldn't he give to see the "Derby," the "Leger," Goodwood, Ascot, and the rest? The probabilities are he would not be able to go to any of these meetings if he were at home; and if he did, he would, in equal probability, leave

them cursing his infatuated investments. See him in the ball-room, in his gay uniform, waltzing with a pretty girl who is listening to the nonsense he is talking with evident satisfaction, and tell me if he is not enjoying himself—enjoying the delights of his waltz and the smiles of his partner, radiant with the harmless vanity engendered by her evident appreciation. Now go and speak to him as he hands her to a seat, or makes her over to her next partner, and casually suggest that India is not a bad country. Will he agree with you? Not a bit of it. If you stop to listen, he will pile invective on invective, with the still lingering light of happiness in his eyes. Poor wretch! What, then, has he on his side which justifies, or helps to justify, his restless dissatisfaction? Undoubtedly he has something. He has to face that terrible hot weather, the summer season of India. He has to struggle through the oppressive heat. He has to scheme so as to live under the shadow of the ceaseless punkah; night and day it waves over him with its eternally monotonous swing. He recoils from any iced drink, and pants to re-supply the evaporized moisture withdrawn by the heat. Still, if we watch him even in this terrible time, he does not bear the appearance of a man sinking under an unbearable burden. He grumbles that he gets up in the middle of the night, and he certainly does get up very early, and has a very long day to get through, and he has not an idea how to get through it; and when he goes out in the evening the wind sweeps on his face with the heat of a furnace, and the sun sinks in a molten cloud of sand. When night comes, the punkah-puller makes it the rule to fall asleep, and the exception to keep awake; and our grumbler is indeed a wretched man, deprived of his sleep and irritated into offensive, though often abortive, measures with a tumbler, an old slipper, or a thick stick. Just as he is going to sleep again, and it is beginning to get cool, he is forced to rise and attend to his morning duties. Still you see him get through his work, and sit down to a morning meal with considerable appetite, and discuss the papers with something more than listlessness in his face. He can still be epigrammatic at the expense of erring brother or frail sister. The sharp sword of scandal retains its ever-whetted edge, even in these dreary days, and smites as keenly through the dust-charged air, perhaps a whit more so than it did in the bracing days of winter and early spring. Nor have whist and billiards lost their charm. Through the torrid hours of noon,

such as have not sought a siesta make the "click" of the billiard-balls nearly as ceaseless as the swing of the punkah; and far up to midnight their suggestive sound divides attention with the quiet, decorous whist-tables where the noble game is rightly played, though not always, it must be confessed, on the principles of Baldwin and Cavendish. Does a man despise the frivolities of the billiard-table? or the sombre silence of the whist quartettes? Look at each mess table: they almost groan under the load of light periodical literature and army of newspapers. There you may read of Gladstonian eloquence; you may con the latest odds on the Derby; the eccentricities of folly and fashion are amply represented. You may peer into the wisdom of Professor Tyndall; you may follow the forest-ranger through the tangles of primæval forests; you may share the loves of many dozen of attached couples blest with no ordinary share of mundane excellence, and proportionately strange in their actions; you can follow them into the sea of peril, into which they leap with a curious persistence, and leave them in assured happiness in an ocean of bliss. If this flimsy mental fodder be not the pabulum of a refined intellectual mind—step into the next room. Surely here, whatever be your taste, you will not be totally unsuited. On each shelf is an array of books—standard works impress you with their solidity. Baker stands there to tell you of the Nile and its tributaries; Pargrave to reveal what Burton had left untold of the mysteries of Arabia; Kinglake to lift you into enthusiasm over the charge of the Six Hundred and the advance on the Alma; Kaye to speak of the tragedies of Afghanistan and the Sepoy revolt. Perhaps Darwin tells his own tale of the origin of species, and Lyell the ceaseless operations of nature; while again the lives of scores of happy and unhappy couples assert their own unreality.

With all these aids, the long hours pass away—and the wretched Anglo-Indian passes his existence in comparative happiness, in spite of himself.

But is he not sometimes condemned to long isolation, in posts—

Pigris ubi nulla campis
Arbor æstivâ recreatur aurâ

* * * * *

Sub curru nimium propinqui
Solis in terrâ domibus negatâ?

Certainly he is—but he grumbles not one whit more or less than he did when he was

enjoying the comparative comforts and society of a large cantonment.

He has a hard time of it, without doubt, on such occasions, but they are generally not of long duration, and are decidedly exceptional. Even then, I take it, that as complete isolation, as utter a want of occupation is as frequently his lot in the bogs of Ireland as in the sands of India. There the atmospheric humidity is as detestable and spirit-crushing as the dry blasts of any Punjab sirocco; and if there should be any call to military duty, the preference lies with India—for a conflict with the half-starved and wholly infatuated peasantry of the Emerald Isle is a duty neither attractive nor conducive to military advancement; while an engagement with the natives of India—if not a high style of warfare—lacks the repulsive features which distinguish the almost fratricidal nature of Irish agrarian *émeutes*. Many people will recollect the picture in *Punch* some two or three years ago, entitled “Country Quarters in Ireland,” or something of the kind, which represented a group of subalterns, in the last stage of desperation from *cunui*, engaged in the detestable amusement of fishing for sparrows, out of the temporary mess-room window, with a bait of bread crumbs. No greater depth of vacuity can well be imagined; and if it has found its parallel in India, it has certainly not been exceeded. We recollect a somewhat similar case in India, but arising from different causes. A young man, one of Her Majesty’s servants, had fallen out with his neighbour, and in revenge the irate youth amused himself by fishing for his enemy’s ducks, over the boundary wall which separated the two enclosures, with a line and hook baited so as to excite the avidity of the aforesaid ducks. In this he was successful; and several, falling unsuspecting victims, were hauled over the wall and secured—and finally sent to the pound, as vagrant poultry caught, *flagrante delicto*, in the destruction of private property. Once in the pound, they could only be liberated by payment of the regulated fine.

There is very little doubt that, in all parts of the world and in all climates, the followers of the sword are occasionally placed in positions which must be regarded as the reverse of lively; but, we conceive, of these India is by no means the worst, as a general rule—either in climate or paucity of pursuits—either in social advantages or in military duty. India is not a land of gold, as was once the prevailing idea; it is still less a paradise of nature in its wealth of tropical vegetation and scenic beauty; over a large extent of the country there

is a sepia-tinted dulness of colouring, which makes one appreciate more keenly the beautiful parts which are not wanting, such as some districts of Central India, and the magnificent mountain ranges of the Himalayas; but we repeat that India has many advantages which the youth of England willfully and with malice prepense ignore, and although it cannot be said of dwellers in this land of the sun,

O fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint,

they cannot be called the unfortunates which their unceasing revilings would endeavour to establish. It is useless to plead nostalgia as an extenuation exceptionally for India, for that yearning for home must be equally strong with those who serve in Canada, Jamaica, or the Cape. Nor in other ways is India exceptionally bad.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE EASTERN ARCHIPELAGO.

NO. IV.

HEARING that the north-eastern extremity of Celebes, between the islands of Banca and Limbó, abounded in the remarkable birds known as Maleos (*Megacephalon rubripes*), Mr. Wallace proceeded there with the view of securing specimens; and he was accompanied by two European friends who hoped to hunt wild pigs, Babizusa, &c., in the locality. The Maleos deposit their eggs in a loose hot black sand of volcanic origin, just above high-water mark. They come down in pairs from the interior to this, and one or two other favourite spots, in the months of August and September. The male and female co-operate in making a hole three or four feet deep, in which the female deposits one large egg, which she covers with about a foot of sand, and then returns to the forest. At intervals of about ten days, she returns to the same spot and lays another egg, till at length six or eight are deposited and the process is completed. The male always comes down and returns with the female. Many birds lay in the same hole, for a dozen eggs are often found together; and these are so large that it is not possible for the body of the bird to contain more than one fully-developed egg at the same time. In confirmation of this view it may be mentioned, that in all the female birds that were shot on their way to the shore there was one large egg, and eight or nine others not exceeding peas in size. After the eggs are deposited in the sand, no further attention is paid them by the parent birds;

and, considering the great distances they come from the interior (often ten or fifteen miles), this at first sight seems strange. As, however, the eggs are deposited by a number of hens in succession in the same hole, it would be impossible for each bird to distinguish its own property; and as the food (consisting entirely of fallen fruit) necessary for such large birds, can only be obtained by roaming over an extensive district, it is clear that if the number of birds which come down to a single beach in the breeding season were obliged to remain in the vicinity of their nests, many would perish from hunger. Moreover, both in the Maleos and the Mound-makers, the fact of only one egg being laid after a considerable interval (of thirteen days, according to the natives) necessitates a long period of two or three months, between the laying of the first and the last egg, assuming that each bird lays six or eight eggs. "Now," says Mr. Wallace, "if these eggs were hatched in the ordinary manner, either the parents must keep sitting continually for this long period, or if they only began to sit after the last egg was deposited, the first would be exposed to injury by the elements, or to destruction by the large lizards, snakes, and other animals which abound in the district. The males and females differ little in appearance, and when walking on the beach the birds present a very handsome appearance. The glossy black and rosy white of the plumage, the helmeted head and elevated tail, like that of the common fowl, give a striking character, which their stately and somewhat sedate walk renders still more remarkable." The colour of the egg-shell is a pale brick red, or, very rarely, pure white; and its dimensions are from four to four and a half inches long, by about two and a half wide. The eggs are esteemed so great a delicacy that the natives come for fifty miles round to obtain them. They are richer than hen's eggs, and of a fine flavour; each one completely fills an ordinary tea-cup, and forms with bread or rice a very good meal.

As one of the great objects, if not the greatest, of Mr. Wallace's numerous journeys in the Malay Archipelago was to obtain specimens of the Birds of Paradise, and to learn something of their habits and distribution—and being (as far as he is aware) the only Englishman who has seen these wonderful birds in their native forests, and obtained specimens of many of them—it is not surprising that a large proportion of his second volume should be devoted to their consideration.

The early history of these birds is wonder-

fully mixed up with fiction. The late Mr. Broderip, in an excellent article upon them, which originally appeared in the *Penny Cyclopaedia*, states that "from one fabulist to another came the tradition that these 'gay creatures of the element' passed their whole existence in sailing in the air, where all the functions of life were carried on, even to the production of their eggs and young. The dew and the vapours were said to be their only food; nor were they ever supposed to touch the earth till the moment of their death; never taking rest except by suspending themselves from the branches of trees by the shafts of the two elongated feathers which form a characteristic of their beautiful race. The appellations of Luft-Vogel, Paradyss-Vogel, Passeros de Sol, Birds of Paradise, and God's Birds, kept up the delusion that originated in the craft of the inhabitants of the eastern countries in which they are found; for the natives scarcely ever produced a skin in former times from which they had not carefully extirpated the feet. Nor was it only the extreme elegance and richness of their feathers that caused these birds to be sought as the plume for turbans of oriental chiefs; for he who wore that plume, relying implicitly on the romantic account of the life and habits of the bird, and impressed with its sacred names, believed that he bore a charmed life, and that he should be invulnerable, even where the fight raged most furiously." John van Linschoten, who wrote in 1598, gives the above names, and adds, that they have neither feet nor wings, and that no one has seen them alive, "for they live in the air, always turning towards the sun."

Pigafetta, who is supposed to have been the first who made these birds known in Europe, represented them with legs; and although he was supported in the leg-question by several eminent Dutch naturalists, fiction was too strong for him, and he was charged by Aldrovandus, and others, with falsehood. Linnæus, in 1760, only described two species, to one of which, in commemoration of the fable of the want of feet, he gave the name of *Apoda*. Since then nine or ten others have been named, all of which were described from more or less imperfect skins; and now Mr. Wallace gives us a list of eighteen species, with the places they are believed to inhabit (see vol. ii., pp. 419, 420). During a residence of many months in the Aru Islands, New Guinea, and Waigiou, —their most abundant *habitats*,—Mr. Wallace obtained five species; while his assistant, Mr. Allen, did not find a single additional species;

but as they had both been told of a place called Sorong, on the mainland of New Guinea, where all the kinds they desired could be obtained, Mr. Allen was sent, with a lieutenant and two soldiers, to this favoured spot to obtain supplies of these rare creatures. Native jealousies, however, stood in the way, the chiefs of the coast-valleys having a monopoly in this department of commerce; and Mr. Allen found that so many difficulties were thrown in his way, that, after a month, he had to return almost empty-handed. From the strange fact that during five years' residence in the land of the Birds of Paradise, Mr. Wallace was unable to purchase skins of half the species which Lesson forty years ago obtained during the voyage of the *Coquille* in the course of a few weeks, it may be safely inferred that all, except the common species of commerce, are daily becoming more hard to obtain. Of the eighteen species enumerated by Mr. Wallace, eleven inhabit New Guinea, and eight of these are entirely confined to that country and the hardly separated island of Salvatty; and as, in consequence of the shallow intervening seas, the Aru Islands and Waigiou were probably once united with it, we shall find that no less than fourteen of the Paradise birds belong to that region, while of the remaining four, three inhabit the north-east of Australia, and one the Moluccas. Hence New Guinea is essentially "the land of the Bird of Paradise." In March, 1857, he arrived at the Aru Islands, where he stayed for two months, mainly in search of these birds. The natives, who were in the habit of shooting them, informed him that they used a bow and arrow; the latter terminating in a conical wooden cap as large as a tea-cup, which kills the bird without injuring the skin or feathers. As the trees frequented by these birds are very lofty, the hunters construct a leafy hut amongst the branches into which they enter before daylight and remain there all day. This was all he could learn from the natives, except that it was too early to obtain birds of good plumage. After two or three thoroughly wet days in which he got nothing, and just as he was beginning to despair, his boy returned with a small bird rather less than a thrush, which amply repaid him for months of delay. It was the King Bird of Paradise (*Paradisea regia*). We will not attempt to describe its beauty further than to observe that "the greater part of its plumage was of an intense cinnabar red, with a gloss as of spun silk," and that "springing from each side of the head, and ordinarily concealed under the

wings, were little tufts of greyish feathers about two inches long, terminating in a band of intense emerald green, and capable of being raised at will and spread out into a pair of elegant fans, when the wings are elevated"—and that the two middle feathers of the tail are in the form of slender wires about five inches long, diverging in a beautiful double curve, and at about an inch from the end, curving spirally inwards, so as to form a pair of glittering metallic-green buttons, hanging five inches below the body and at some distance apart. "These two ornaments," says Mr. Wallace,—"the breast-fans and the spiral-tipped tail wires—are altogether unique, not occurring in any other species of the eight thousand different birds that are known to exist upon the earth."

We can heartily enter into the emotions excited in the mind of the enthusiastic naturalist wandering in a forest hitherto traversed only by savages, and far from the busy haunts of civilized man, when he gazed upon this "thing of beauty." He soon afterwards obtained another equally beautiful specimen, and had the opportunity of, to a certain degree, seeing a little of the habits of both it and a larger species, the Great Bird of Paradise. As the spring merges into early summer, the plumage of the great birds increases in brilliancy, and they commence a series of dancing parties in certain trees having spreading branches and large scattered leaves, which give free space for the birds to play and exhibit their plumes. The following is Mr. Wallace's account of a dance. "On one of these trees a dozen or twenty full-plumaged male birds assemble together, raise up their wings, stretch out their necks, and elevate their exquisite plumes, keeping them in a continual vibration. Between whiles they fly across from branch to branch in great excitement, so that the whole tree is filled with waving plumes in every variety of attitude and motion. The wings are raised vertically over the back, the head is bent down and stretched out, and the long plumes are raised up and expanded, till they form two magnificent golden fans, striped with deep red at the base, and fading off into the pale brown tint of the finely divided and softly waving points. The whole bird is then overshadowed by them, the crouching body, yellow head, and emerald green throat forming but the foundation and setting to the golden glory which waves above. When seen in this attitude, the Bird of Paradise really deserves its name, and must be ranked as one of the most beautiful

and most wonderful of living things." In the frontispiece to his second volume Mr. Wallace depicts these gorgeous birds, which are of about the size of our common crow, in the full enjoyment of their dance; but as is ever the case in all terrestrial happiness,

Medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid.

The picture, alas! also shows two natives, under umbrella-like coverings amongst the leaves, aiming at their prey, while a third is seen collecting the victims as they fall!

Mr. Wallace's visit to these almost unknown Aru Islands, extended from January to the beginning of July, 1857, when he sailed with a convoy of praus to Macassar, accomplishing the voyage of more than a thousand miles in nine and a-half days. He describes his expedition to these islands as eminently successful, and so it certainly was; for, notwithstanding much illness and many other drawbacks, he brought away more than 9000 specimens of about 1600 distinct species; he enjoyed the rare delights of exploring one of the most remarkable and least-known faunas in the world, and succeeded in the main object of his journey—namely, in securing fine specimens of the Birds of Paradise, and observing them in their native forests. By this success he was stimulated to continue his researches for five years longer in the far east; and we will now follow him to New Guinea—a country in which no naturalist had ever previously resided, and which is supposed to contain more strange and beautiful natural history objects than any other part of the globe.

Starting from Ternata on the 25th of March, 1858, in a Dutch trading schooner, with four servants, Mr. Wallace proceeded on his long projected voyage to New Guinea; and as he knew that he should have to build his own house at Dorey, on the north coast of the island, where he was to be landed, he took with him eighty waterproof mats, made of Pandanus leaves, to protect his baggage on first landing, and to form the roof of his residence. On the 11th of April he arrived at Dorey, and for the first three days was fully occupied from morning to night in building a house, with the assistance of a dozen Papuans and his own men. On the next day the schooner left for the more eastern islands, and Mr. Wallace found himself "fairly established as the only European inhabitant of the vast island of New Guinea," and the proprietor of a wooden house, twenty feet long by fifteen broad, with a bamboo floor, a single door of thatch, and a large window. Outside was a

little hut that served for cooking purposes, and a bench roofed over, where his men could sit and skin birds and animals. For the first ten days it generally rained every afternoon, and all night; in the intervals of fine weather, however, he and his men secured many beautiful birds, but only the common Bird of Paradise, the finer species being brought for sale from Amberbaki, a hundred miles west. Here he procured four distinct species of a group of horned flies, belonging to a genus previously undiscovered, and to which the term *Elaphomia*, or "deer flies," has since been given. The horns spring from beneath the eye, and seem to be a prolongation of the lower part of the orbit. In the largest species they are nearly as long as the body, and have two branches. These appendages are peculiar to the male insects.

On board the Dutch steamer, *Etna*, which waited for some weeks in the harbour for coal, Mr. Wallace saw a pair of those rare animals, the tree-kangaroos, alive. They differ, he tells us, from the ground-kangaroo in having a more hairy tail, not thickened at the base, and not serving for a third leg or support; and in having powerful claws on the fore-feet by which they grasp the bark and branches, and seize the leaves on which they feed. They seem to have gradually undergone these modifications to enable them to feed on the foliage in the forests of New Guinea.

This long-desired expedition to a vast, unexplored country unfortunately turned out a complete failure. "Continual rain, continual sickness, little wholesome food, with a plague of ants and flies surpassing anything I had before met with, required," says Mr. Wallace, "all a naturalist's ardour to encounter, and when they were not compensated by great success in collecting, became all the more insupportable;" and so, after a three months' residence, he bade adieu to Dorey, with intense disappointment. Instead of obtaining several of the rarer Birds of Paradise, Mr. Wallace never saw even one of them, and he did not secure any one superlatively fine bird or insect. Although he never returned to the main-land, he subsequently spent three months of the summer of 1860 in Waigiou, an island on the north-western extremity of New Guinea. He made Muka, a village on the south-east of the island, situated about fifteen miles south of the equator and in east long. 131°, his headquarters, and, as at Dobbo, at once proceeded to build a house. Here he very soon succeeded in obtaining specimens of the rare red Bird of Paradise (*Paradisca rubra*), which is found



Once a Week,]

[February 26, 1870.

WANDERERS.

nowhere except in this island. Fancy the delight of a naturalist who, when quietly sipping his coffee by the open window in the early morning, can watch these gorgeous creatures settling on the top branches of an adjacent lofty fig-tree, and flying from branch to branch. This fig-tree only yielded him two male birds, as they soon ceased visiting it, either from a sense of danger or from the fruit becoming scarce. From Muka he proceeded to a village called Bessir, lying some miles westward, where there are a number of Papuans, who catch and preserve these birds. Here he resided for six weeks in a residence offered to him by the chief. It was just eight feet square, raised on posts, so that the floor was four and a half feet above the ground, and the highest part of the roof only five feet above the floor. Mr. Wallace, who is more than six feet high, was just able, by bending double and carefully creeping in, to sit on his chair with his head just clear of the ceiling. Having explained to the bird-catchers the price he would give, in advance, for fresh skins, in hatchets, beads, &c., he found only one who ventured to take goods equivalent to two birds: the rest being suspicious of the white stranger; but when they found that their companion was fairly dealt with, six others took away goods, for from one to six birds each. As the birds were caught a long way off in the forest, they did not care to return with one, but would tie it by the leg to a stick till they caught another. The birds, thus tied, injured or destroyed themselves in struggling to escape. "One had its beautiful head all defiled by pitch from a dammar torch; another had been so long dead that its stomach was turning green." He had therefore to insist on the birds being brought alive, and a large bamboo cage, fitted up with troughs for food and water, was constructed to keep them alive, if possible. The birds were not only supplied with their favourite fruits, but indulged freely in grasshoppers, and drank plenty of water; and yet on the second day they always showed less activity, while on the morning of the third day they were almost always found dead without any apparent cause. "Some of them," says Mr. Wallace, "ate boiled rice, as well as fruits and insects; but after trying many in succession not one in ten lived more than three days. I tried immature as well as full-plumaged birds, but with no better success, and at length gave it up as a hopeless task, and confined my attention to preserving specimens in as good a condition as possible." On his return home, in 1862, he was, however, so fortunate as to find, at Sin-

gapore, two adult males of the true Paradise Birds; and as they appeared to be healthy and fed voraciously on rice, bananas, and cockroaches, he determined on purchasing them and attempting to bring them to England by the overland route. Their price was one hundred pounds! At Bombay he stayed a week to lay in a fresh stock of bananas. On board the steamer he set traps for cockroaches, which were rare in those well-appointed vessels; but at Malta, where he stayed a fortnight, he procured a large supply from a bake-house. Notwithstanding the sharp frost they experienced between Marseilles and Paris, the birds arrived in London in perfect health. One of them lived for a year, and the other for two years, in the Zoological Gardens, and they often displayed their beautiful plumage. "It is evident, therefore," he observes, "that the Paradise Birds are very hardy, and require air and exercise rather than heat; and I feel sure that if a good sized conservatory could be devoted to them, or if they could be turned loose in the tropical department of the Crystal Palace, or the great palm house at Kew, they would live in this country for many years." Mr. Wallace's opinion that with moderate care these birds may be kept in slight confinement is corroborated by the observations made by Mr. Bennett more than thirty years previous. This eminent naturalist, in his "Wanderings in New South Wales, Batavia, Singapore, and China," published in 1834, describes a live specimen of the great Bird of Paradise that had lived in Mr. Beale's possession at Macao for nine years. He was enclosed in a large and roomy cage, and for all we know to the contrary may have survived Mr. Bennett's visit many years. Mr. Beale was very desirous of obtaining a living female, but there is no evidence that he was successful.

The methods employed by the natives for securing these birds are various. The red birds are in general noosed by the leg as they come to eat a favourite fruit, while according to Mr. Bennett, they are also caught with birdlime made from the pulpy juice yielded by the trunk of the bread-fruit tree. The native mode of preparing the birds for the market is to cut off the wings and feet, and then skin the body up to the beak, taking out the skull. A short stick is then run up through the specimen, coming out at the mouth. Round this some leaves are stuffed, and the whole is wrapped up in a palm spathe, and dried in the smoky huts. By this plan the head and body are much reduced, and the greatest prominence is given to the flowing plumage.

CAUGHT BY A THREAD.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

CHAPTER VIII.

SIR CHARLES tapped at the door of the study, and, receiving no reply, entered the room to ascertain if it was vacant. The rector was seated at his writing table, and in a chair by his side was Mr. Bentley Wyvern. They were both so intent upon the examination of a small coloured plan spread out before them, that the presence of the baronet was not immediately perceived. He paused after taking a couple of steps towards them, and was hesitating as to the propriety of retreating unobserved, when Mr. Clare turned his eyes towards him.

"You didn't hear me knock, and I am afraid that I interrupt you."

"It is of no consequence," said the rector, rising and walking to the hearth-rug.

Bentley Wyvern rolled up the plan and put it in his pocket.

"Very satisfactory, isn't it, Mr. Clare?" he said, rubbing his hands gleefully.

"It certainly is, and promises to become still more so."

"I am anxious to speak to you about Florence," said Sir Charles. "The fact is, I have just left her, and we have been talking about our marriage."

"Very natural—very natural," remarked Mr. Clare, smiling.

"At my solicitation she has given her consent that the wedding shall take place next month. Allow me to hope that neither you nor Mrs. Clare will offer any objection."

"Next month!" exclaimed the rector, turning quickly round as he was in the act of poking the fire. "You can hardly fail to see that—that such a proceeding would be decidedly premature."

"Pardon me," replied Sir Charles, his face darkening, "I am not at all inclined to agree with you on that point. Why do you say it is premature?"

"Would it not be infinitely better to wait till the claim that you have pending is decided?"

The baronet, when he had but the faintest prospect of becoming Earl of Bideford, would have thought this a very reasonable suggestion, but now that he felt so certain of the result, any hesitation in granting his request occasioned him considerable displeasure.

"I don't think it makes much difference so far as *that* is concerned," he said, after a moment's silence. "I shall take a furnished house in Mayfair, and remain in it on our return from Paris, till it suits the convenience of Sir William Thorpe to vacate the family residence in Brook Street. As to the place in Leicestershire, I intend to have it renovated throughout the interior as soon as it comes into my possession, so it will be several months before it is ready for our reception."

"You appear to regard a decision in your favour as beyond the possibility of doubt."

"Quite so; and from all you know of the matter I should have thought you would have taken the same view of the case. Ask Wyvern whether I am justified in considering the question as settled."

"Clearly so," said Bentley Wyvern, leaning against the chimney-piece, and his face assuming a peculiar expression. "Lord Bideford, or as my friend prefers to call him, Sir William Thorpe, must be already aware that his case is hopeless, for it has been ascertained that his solicitors have examined the register at Doddington. By-the-by, Pennington, I believe you will be entitled to demand the rents that he has received from the estates for the last six years, so that you will have an immense sum paid to you. I am afraid, however, that his means will be inadequate to discharge the whole of so great a liability."

"You must give him time," said Mr. Clare, turning to Sir Charles. "The payments might be made to extend over a series of years."

"Oh! he won't find me a very harsh creditor."

"It is unfortunate, Pennington, for him that you are already engaged to be married," said Bentley Wyvern, glancing at the rector.

"I can't see how that can make the slightest difference to him."

"He has an only daughter, Lady Beatrice Thorpe, and he might have compromised matters by proposing that you should marry her."

"Oh, ah! I understand what you mean now," said Sir Charles, laughing. "But perhaps she wouldn't have consented to such an arrangement."

"Under the circumstances, I think it very likely that she *would*."

"It is hardly worth while to discuss the subject," remarked Mr. Clare, gravely. He walked to the table, and, after looking thoughtfully at a few papers lying upon it, returned to his former position on the hearth-rug.

"Have you decided upon granting my request?" asked Sir Charles.

"Do you wish for an answer at once?"

"I really don't see any grounds for your hesitation," replied the baronet, somewhat sulkily.

"There are many circumstances to be considered in a case of this kind. Be good enough to remain here while I have a few minutes' conversation with Mrs. Clare."

When the rector had left the room, Bentley Wyvern laid his hand on the shoulder of Sir Charles, and indulged in a short laugh.

"It was lucky that I happened to be present at this interview, otherwise you wouldn't have induced Mr. Clare to consent to your marrying his daughter while you are still, in point of fact, as poor as ever."

"But he hasn't given his consent yet."

"No; but he intends to do so, unless I am very much mistaken in my estimate of his character. It was not without a motive that I alluded to Lady Beatrice Thorpe. A short time before you came in I mentioned to him that it was by no means improbable some attempt would be made by the other side to effect a compromise with you. When I afterwards, in your presence, jokingly spoke of your engagement being an obstacle in the way of a marriage with Lady Beatrice, I wished to remind him that, after all, it was *only* an engagement, and might be broken, if circumstances arose to render it necessary."

"Not without behaving very dishonourably."

"Well, I dare say most people would take that view of your conduct in the event of your failing to fulfil the promise you have given."

"There is not a soul, having any claim to be considered a gentleman, who wouldn't."

"Ah! But let me ask you, Pennington, whether you believe that he would keep *his* promise if, before your marriage, an adverse decision were given in the Bideford case?"

"By Jove! I don't think he would. I am sure, however, that Florence would remain true to me, although she is a little capricious occasionally."

"It's perhaps fortunate for you that neither the lady nor her father are likely to be tested in that way," said Bentley Wyvern, drily. "What I hinted to Mr. Clare will not be without its effect. I only wish that my own hopes were——"

He checked himself as the rector re-entered the room.

"You see, Charles, I have had sufficient consideration for your feelings not to keep

you long in suspense. There are some—some little matters that I shall have to arrange with you in the course of the next day or two; but, in the meantime, I give my consent to your union with Florence at the time you have fixed. You know how affectionate and good she is. Strive to be worthy of so great a treasure."

"You may depend upon my doing all I can to make her life happy," said Sir Charles, with some earnestness.

"I am convinced you are sincere in what you say. She loves you dearly, very dearly; and I devoutly pray that she may continue to do so to the end."

The rector took out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes.

"It will be no fault of mine if she don't," said Sir Charles. "And now I must leave you, for I wish to let Florence know that you have acceded to my request."

The door had scarcely closed behind him when the sound of carriage-wheels was heard approaching the house.

"I have very little difficulty in guessing who my visitor is," said Mr. Clare. "It is rarely that Dr. Craven calls upon me at any other hour than this."

"Pennington is very much to be envied," observed Bentley Wyvern, after a long pause, during which he had gazed abstractedly at the fire. "I hoped at one time that my wedding and his might have taken place on the same day; but I fear there is not the slightest probability of that."

"I should have been very happy if it could have been so arranged. Have you spoken to Mary upon the subject?"

"No, I am waiting till there is some reason for supposing that an offer of marriage from me would be accepted. It is possible that I mistake what is merely natural reserve for a disinclination to receive my attentions, yet I cannot help suspecting that a previous attachment exists."

"A mere girlish fancy, which has occasioned me a good deal of annoyance. I have remonstrated with her upon the subject, and have reason to know that all correspondence between her and—and the person in question has ceased."

Mr. Clare only told the bare truth when he stated this. He thought it undesirable to allude to the means which he had adopted to prevent any letters passing between Mary and Fenwick. The true state of the case was, however, tolerably well known to Bentley Wyvern.

"You may rest assured," continued the

rector, "that I shall use all my influence in furtherance of your wishes."

He rang the bell, and a servant appeared.

"Was that Dr. Craven who arrived a few minutes ago?"

"That drove up to the door, sir?"

"Yes."

"It was a gentleman that wished to see Miss Mary."

Imagining that the visitor could be no other than Fenwick Towers the rector's face coloured with anger.

"Has he left?" he asked, after a moment's pause, during which Bentley Wyvern looked at him keenly.

"No, sir, he is in the room opposite with Miss Mary," replied the man.

Mr. Clare walked quickly to the table, and wrote a few lines upon a sheet of paper which he folded and handed to the servant.

"Give that to Mrs. Graves-Parr; and say to the gentleman whom I have just inquired about that I desire to see him immediately."

He had refrained from mentioning the name of Fenwick Towers in the hearing of Bentley Wyvern, but now it occurred to the rector that under the circumstances it would have been better had he gone to Fenwick instead of asking him to come into the study. It was probable, however, that the message was already delivered, so he decided upon receiving him there, and losing no time in getting rid of Bentley Wyvern's presence. But at that moment the door was thrown open by the servant, and a stranger entered.

"I understand that you desire to have some conversation with me," he said, advancing towards Mr. Clare.

"Allow me to ask your name?" said the rector, looking at him in blank surprise.

"Was it to make that inquiry that you cut short my interview with your daughter?"

"No, sir," replied Mr. Clare, stiffly. "The fact is, I was under the impression that a person with whom I have some acquaintance was with her when I sent the messenger."

"Well, my name is Hurlston."

"Perhaps I had better retire?" said Bentley Wyvern, going towards the door.

"There is no necessity for your doing so, that I am aware of," replied Mr. Clare. "I presume that this gentleman has called upon my daughter in reference to our schools in which she takes so warm an interest."

"You are mistaken. The object of my visit in the first place was to see her and endeavour to form some opinion of her disposition—her character."

"Really, Mr. Hurlston, she ought to feel very much flattered by your visit," remarked Mr. Clare, smiling.

"I suppose that's a polite way of giving me to understand that you consider it great impertinence on my part to seek an interview with her for such a purpose."

"Oh pray don't put any other construction upon my words than that which they fairly warrant."

"I think you will find that Mr. Hurlston is endeavouring to conceal the real object of his visit under an affectation of eccentricity," observed Bentley Wyvern.

The old man turned round and looked steadily in the face of the last speaker. "I remember your visit to Northumberland Street," he said, "and the opinion that I then somewhat hastily formed of you is confirmed." Then, addressing himself to the rector, he continued—"Is this the husband you have selected for your daughter Mary?"

"Family arrangements of that kind hardly form a fitting subject for a stranger to question me upon," replied Mr. Clare, coldly. "Ah!" he exclaimed suddenly, "I think I have discovered the object of your seeking an interview with my daughter."

"I have no objection to enlighten you to some extent on that point, even in the presence of Mr. Wyvern."

"As I have not the slightest curiosity upon the subject, I prefer being absent while you are entering into an explanation," said Bentley Wyvern, as he crossed the room, and passed out.

"You have been sent here by Mr. Fenwick Towers," said the rector, sternly.

"No; my visit was not suggested by him, nor is he even aware of it. But, for all that, it was my strong interest in his welfare which brought me to Upfield to-night. Besides the wish that I had to see your daughter Mary before my departure from this country, I was desirous of ascertaining whether the cessation of her letters to him was occasioned by a change of feeling. I am glad to find that this is not so."

"It is extremely reprehensible that a man of your advanced years should give any encouragement to a daughter in persisting to disobey her parent."

"Will you allow a man of my advanced years to take a chair? I am not quite so strong as usual to-day, but I attribute that to the sudden change in the weather. Thank goodness! I shall be out of this wretched climate ere long."

Mr. Clare waved his hand towards a seat, and took one himself.

"You spoke just now of your daughter's disobedience," said Mr. Hurlston.

"I did."

"But you seem quite unconscious of your own selfishness."

"Do you consider that a desire to secure my child's happiness lays me open to the charge of selfishness?" said Mr. Clare, frowning.

"My opinion is, that you care very little about her happiness. Your chief aim is to obtain for her a rich husband—one who suits your own tastes—not hers. The girl, as you know, has placed her affections on Fenwick Towers; yet you insist upon her giving up all hope of marrying him, simply because he is poor. Well, admitting that he is so, you are quite able to give her such a dowry as would secure them both a competence, at any rate."

"Yes; but I unhesitatingly refuse to do any such thing."

"And that's the way in which you endeavour to secure your daughter's happiness, is it?"

"I cannot allow you to question the motives which actuate my conduct," replied Mr. Clare, angrily.

"Pooh! they are obvious enough, and chief among them—as I told you just now—is selfishness. After all, you are no worse than the rest of the world."

"I am not accustomed to be addressed in language such as yours, and I decline to listen to you any longer," said Mr. Clare, rising from his chair.

"Oh! you dislike my plain way of speaking, eh? I suppose you are so much in the habit of enlarging upon the faults of other people that it's quite a novelty to have any of your own pointed out."

"I trust that I am at all times ready to acknowledge my own shortcomings, and to receive a merited rebuke with proper humility," said Mr. Clare, making a great effort to get his chin within the folds of his cravat. "You may tell Mr. Towers, however, that your appeal has not produced any effect upon me, except, indeed, that it renders me still more determined in the course which I intend to pursue. My earnest wish is to see Mary the wife of the gentleman who has just left us. Should she refuse to be guided by me in that respect, I have the power to punish her obstinacy—and I shall do so. Her sister had a foolish attachment of this kind a couple of years ago; but she at once followed my advice, and gave up all idea of marrying the

young man. I have now the satisfaction of knowing that ere many months elapse she will be a peeress."

"You are of the world, worldly," said Mr. Hurlston, rising to his feet, and approaching the rector. "There is very little probability of our meeting again, for I shall shortly take my departure for Australia. Let me, therefore, take this opportunity of telling you that you will some day bitterly repent having tried to force your daughter into a marriage with Mr. Wyvern. Although I have passed my eighty-fifth birth-day, the memory of my own first and only love still clings to me. Like Fenwick Towers I was poor in those days, and Mary's family refused to consent to our union. I went abroad in the hope of enriching myself, but during my absence her parents intercepted all the letters that I sent to her. At any rate, it is certain that not one of them reached her. Giving way to the solicitations of her parents, she married my old rival—a man that she had previously refused—and made what you would call an eligible match. He proved what I always knew him to be, a heartless scoundrel, and cruelly avenged himself for all the slights to which he had been subjected during his courtship. Poor Mary," continued the old man, after a pause, "she did not long survive her marriage."

"Mr. Wyvern is a man of the highest moral character; and, therefore, I feel convinced that he will prove a most kind and affectionate husband."

"He shall never marry your daughter if it be in my power to prevent it," said Mr. Hurlston, with a sudden display of his old violence.

"May I ask if you are a relative of Mr. Towers?" inquired the rector, staring at his interlocutor.

"No, sir. Till a few months ago we were utter strangers. But he rendered me a service on a certain occasion, and I shall repay it."

"There can be no objection to your doing that, but I must insist upon your not interfering in my family affairs. I have forbidden my daughter to hold any communication with Mr. Towers, and I am now compelled to inform you that I shall regard any subsequent visit from you as an unwarrantable intrusion."

"It is very improbable that I shall ever cross your threshold again. I have seen your daughter, and fully approve of Fenwick's choice," said the old man, taking up his hat.

The rector bowed coldly, and rang the bell for a servant to show Mr. Hurlston out.

As the old man passed through the hall the rustle of a silk dress caught his ear. He

turned and saw Mary in the act of ascending the staircase. Advancing quickly towards her, he held out his hand.

"Our interview was very abruptly terminated; but it has served its purpose. Remain true to your own heart, and all will be well. In a few days I leave England for ever. Promise me that the first letter you write after your marriage shall be to Ulysses Hurlston."

"What a strange request!" she exclaimed, looking at him in surprise.

"Do you think so?" he said, with a peculiar smile. He bent down his head and whispered to her.

"There is no immediate prospect of that," she answered, gravely. "However, if it will yield you any gratification, I promise."

"Who was that lady that came into the room when we were together—not your mother?"

"Oh, no, it was Mrs. Graves-Parr. I am afraid that you were not very kindly received by papa, for he seems to have been aware that you came to speak to me about Fenwick."

"My interview with him was not a remarkably agreeable one. However, it is better not to allude to it."

"You will tell Fenwick that you have seen me?"

The door of the study opened, and Mr. Clare came out.

"Good-bye, and remember your promise," said the old man, taking her hand in his.

"What promise have you given Mary?" asked the rector, in a tone of displeasure.

"To write to me immediately after her marriage," replied Mr. Hurlston, as he walked towards the door.

tea and coffee between England and France is very marked. While each individual in France consumes on an average 1160 *grammes* of coffee, and 9 of tea, the average consumption in Great Britain is 1679 of tea, and 473 of coffee. The *litre* is about nine-tenths of a quart, and the *gramme* is rather more than a quarter of a drachm.

THERE IS A WANT OF SONOROUSNESS in the English language which is especially felt when we desire to make ourselves heard at a distance in giving an alarm. The "ho!" or "hi!" to which we have recourse, or the "cooe!" of the Australian settler, answer well enough to call attention in ordinary cases, but do not summon the hearer instantly to our assistance. "Help!" "police!" are not open sounds, and do not carry like the French "*à moi!*" or "*au secours!*" which ring well through the air. It would be a great advantage if any one would invent a good resonant cry which should be understood to mean urgency. The constable who at the recent Bristol tragedy shouted "Fire!" to alarm the mob, showed his sense and presence of mind. The word strikes strongly on the ear, and carries the idea of danger at once with it. The late Mr. Charles Sheridan in attempting to land from a steamer, one dark night, fell into the water, and escaped with some difficulty from his perilous position. "What did you do?" asked a friend to whom the accident was narrated. "Why, what do you think?" answered his niece, Mrs. Norton. "Instead of screaming 'murder!' or 'fire!' as any one of sense would have done under the circumstances, he only swam, and called 'boat!' Of course no one went to his assistance!"

TABLE TALK.

M. BLOCK, who is universally regarded as the highest European authority on the subject of statistics, has arrived at the following conclusions regarding the extent to which different nations consume certain substances which in England we consider to be the necessities of life. The average consumption of wine in *litres* for each person is:—In France 130, Italy 120, Portugal 80, Switzerland 59, Austria 53, Spain 30, Great Britain 2. The proportion of beer is very different; each inhabitant of Great Britain consumes on an average 139 *litres*, while in Belgium the quantity is 138, in Bavaria 125, in Switzerland 85, in France 19, in Spain 2, and in Italy 1. The contrast in the use of

I HEARD the following related by Captain (now Lieut.-Col.) P——n, at his own table:—When in India with my regiment, we were, at one time, quartered at a place where there was a missionary station. Some of the officers (as was frequently the case) having much leisure, and being so disposed, gave lay assistance to the clergyman, in his endeavours to instruct the native population. Upon one occasion, I attended a special service which had been appointed to precede the celebration of the Lord's Supper, of which three advanced proselytes desired to partake. Upon the occasion, the missionary preached a short sermon upon Faith, the foundation of Christianity, taking his text from Romans iv. 3—"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." He treated the

subject in a plain way, suitable to the capacity of his hearers, and expounded the narrative in Genesis xxii. A native Hindoo had been observed at the service, who, although he had not previously attended the instruction of the missionary, was extremely attentive to the sermon. On the evening of the same day, I and a brother officer rode some six or seven miles towards a native village, from whence most of the converts came; nearing which our attention was attracted to a crowd of natives, in the midst of which a large pile of wood was blazing; and the monotonous tum-tum of the Indian drum and a low croning wail were audible. But few words are necessary to describe the difficulty of teaching Christianity to a race of ignorant people whose minds are so governed by external impressions, and who are so matter-of-fact in practice; and still fewer words to describe the horror we felt when we found that the strange and attentive native had returned home and literally carried out the command given to Abraham! He had slaughtered his son, and was now offering him to the "big God," as a sacrifice!

THE PARIS CORRESPONDENT of *Land and Water* mentions the drowning in a pond, near Challefont, of a young man named Crottet, who "was a kind of snake-charmer, and got his living by killing vipers, which reptiles, we learn, he was able, from long habit, to handle familiarly and without any danger. The premium on each viper was twopence-halfpenny, and Crottet generally managed to kill in the season from twelve to fifteen *per diem*. He fell, not at his post, but into the water, whilst engaged in cleaning out a fish-pond, and so perished." Viper-catching must, of necessity, be a rare trade; though we occasionally meet with notices of it. For example, the opening chapter of Mr. Wm. Gilbert's new and powerful story, "The Struggle in Ferrara" (*Sunday Magazine*, Oct., 1869, p. 42), at once introduces us to a professional viper-catcher. Here the date of the story is May, 1554; and the viper-catcher has, at night-fall, lighted three torches on the swampy ground and marshes in the vicinity of Ferrara, in order to attract the vipers, so that he may secure them as a remedy against the plague that was then raging in the neighbourhood. This man is represented as having been thus engaged, night after night. "What am I seeking for?" he replies to the person who addresses him, "why, for the only secure remedy but one against the plague—vipers, to be sure. Here I have been, night after night, trying to catch

them, and burning my torches to no purpose, and have not caught three in a week. In the days of the last duke, I have frequently known ten to be caught in a night, and once my son-in-law caught as many as nineteen. When the plague was in Ferrara we had abundance of vipers, and many were cured of the plague; but now we are utterly at its mercy." This is the folk-lore of vipers. Another remarkable notice of a viper-catcher—presumably drawn from actual experience—will be found in Borrow's "Lavengro" (vol. i., chap. 4). The viper-catcher there introduced to us exercised his calling on that now drained and corn-growing tract of country, which, up to 1850, was known as Whittlesea-merc, and whose boundaries, for some years after that date (as the writer of this can testify), swarmed with vipers. The particular viper-catcher whom Mr. Borrow introduces to us exercised his calling in the first quarter of the present century; and he speaks of taming a few of the vipers that he had caught, but as hunting "them mostly for the fat which they contain, out of which I make unguents which are good for various sore troubles, especially for the rheumatism." (p. 52.) Here again we have the folk-lore of viper-catching. The man then tells the author of "Lavengro" the story of the king of vipers, and gives him a viper that he "had tamed and rendered quite harmless by removing the fangs." Quite recently, I saw a viper not far from the spot where that viper-catcher found the king of the vipers: and I could hope these same vipers may soon be as extinct as the bustard (unfortunately) is in the same region; or, as (happily) the wild savages and cannibals are in other quarters of the globe. For, I think we can get on—even in the fens—without vipers.

A STORY IS EXTANT, dating from the time of the Puritans, of a man being taken before a magistrate, convicted, and fined five shillings for using profane language: upon which the graceless fellow, asking if it was the same price for a curse, threw down ten shillings, and cursed his judges roundly to their faces. Now, though this incident occurred, or is said to have occurred, two hundred years ago, our legislators have never yet taken the hint afforded them by this amateur of swearing, but persist to the present day in inflicting the senseless punishment of a fine upon various offences against public morality. How can a money fine ever be an appropriate punishment for a moral delinquency? If a man can pay it, he will care little about the loss; if he cannot,

the penalty is commuted for a much more severe one. The consequences appear every day in our police reports. A tradesman falsifies his weights and measures, adulterates the goods he sells, and, after carrying on his iniquitous traffic for a year or two perhaps, the law steps in, and makes him pay 5*l*. But as he has not gone on his warfare against the public without counting the cost, he pays his forfeit readily, pockets the balance of his illegal gains, and starts afresh on the same road. A "respectable gentleman who keeps his gig" gets drunk, makes a row in the street, frightens or hurts women and children, wrenches off knockers, and makes himself generally useful and agreeable; or he beats his horse within an inch of its wretched life; and when taken to the police court is fined a sum which is nothing to him, and, as the reporter frequently says, "paid it immediately, and left the court apparently well satisfied to have got off so easily." But if he be a poor man, with more excuse for his conduct, greater temptations, and less power and habit of self-control, not having wherewithal to pay, he is sent to prison, and loses his employment and his character. The only possible defence for such uneven sentences is, that in the first case the State is put to no expense in punishing the offender, while in the second it has to bear the charge of his maintenance during imprisonment: but such an argument can hardly be put forth by a civilized community. Will it ever dawn upon our lawgivers that, since the idea of punishment is to deter from crime, something like adaptation of cause to effect might be advisable, as we see it in nature? A man who puts his hand into the fire knows that he will be burnt; but he must be clever and far-sighted indeed if he anticipates what punishment a police magistrate will visit him with for any given offence.

CIVILIZATION has lately taken a step in a singular direction in Japan. On the 1st of January, 1869, the city of Yedo was thrown open to general trade; and on that day Messrs. Rangan & Co. availed themselves of this concession, and started a line of well-appointed stage coaches between Yedo and Yokohama, one coach running each way daily. Their commencement was inauspicious; it was mid-winter; nobody seemed to know anything of the object for which these strange vehicles left these cities at certain intervals; and the coaching speculation was in fact so unsuccessful that it was almost resolved to give it up at the end of the first month's trial. It fortunately, how-

ever, happened that a friend suggested to the proprietors that the coaches should be advertised in the *Japan Gazette*, which seems to be the *Times* of that country. The result of a judicious course of advertising was at once perceptible, and instead of the coaches having to be discontinued, it became necessary that their number should be doubled. In fact, two coaches were running each way daily; and it was believed that in a few months' time coaches would run every two hours, so completely successful had been the result of the experiment. Moreover, the Japanese have taken such a liking to the new carriages, that they frequently hire several of them for a day's excursion, just as we charter a break for a pic-nic. On one occasion, early in March, they engaged no less than nine coaches, which must have formed a procession exciting no little wonder in the minds of the villagers living in their route. The Japanese will soon, doubtless, learn the art of driving four or six-in-hand for themselves; and a Daimio driving his own drag, provided he attends to the orthodox rules of the road, will be a far more pleasant personage to deal with than the Daimios with their retinues of sword-men, whose conduct on the public roads to Europeans has so often called forth the necessity for government interference.

IT IS BUT A FEW YEARS SINCE the use of *to leave* as a neuter verb was denounced publicly by all literary critics, as a "hideous vulgarity." So easy, however, is the descent into the Avernus of slip-slop that this barbarism now meets with ready acceptance. We read almost every day, in the *Times* and other papers, such a sentence as "The *Amphitrite* left yesterday for Malta." In what latitude may "yesterday" lie? It puts one in mind of the old facetious problem—"How far is it from Waterloo Bridge to next Friday?"

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THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH OUR HEROES MEET.



ROBERT MORTIMER was in the habit of making some return for his brother Harold's hospitality at Madingley by receiving him, together with Miss Margaret, for a month or six weeks in Grosvenor Square, usually in the best part of the season. Sir Harold and his sister would make Robert's house their home from the end of April until the beginning of June. In this time they got through a round of dinners and evenings; Miss Margaret and Mrs. Robert driving in the Park every afternoon in the neat barouche of the Grosvenor Square establishment—dark blue picked out with silver, with the family scutcheon and crest on the panels, and flashing in the sun from the bright plates on the harness. Sir Harold was very regular in his attendance at his club; and on Monday and Thursday afternoons might always be seen at Tattersall's, chatting with his old friends, and grieving with the fogies of the

old school at the falling off in the stamina of thoroughbred stock. Sometimes, on a great night, he would be persuaded to brave the heat and discomfort of the House, and accompany his brother Robert thither when the Member for Malton was going to explain the complicated policy of the Pink Tape Office, in reply to some officious questioner with a talent for putting awkward points: or when Gladstone and Disraeli were going to speak. Sir Harold disliked the business of sitting-out a debate, as he took no interest in political matters beyond looking at his morning paper and scanning the division lists, and feeling very much rejoiced if the Tories had ever so small a majority. But, as a man with a stake in the country, and a brother in Parliament, he looked upon it as a sort of religious duty to go down to the House two or three times during his stay in town, and just see for himself how things were going on. When there, he took a prominent seat in Mr. Speaker's gallery, and was very attentive for the space of half an hour: then, if the night were hot, he would mop the perspiration from his face with his green and yellow bandanna, spread it carefully over his knee, and doze gently, waking only when the cheers of honourable gentlemen were very noisy or cries of "Hear" and "No" "No" grew loud: and waiting quietly till Robert's carriage came to take them home. As we have said, the half-brothers, Harold and Robert, had few tastes in common; certain qualities, however, are hereditary and run in families: as Mr. Thackeray remarked in "The Virginians," "All the Warringtons, since the Conqueror, have been remarkable for their love of mutton." So with the Mortimers, a love of savoury dishes and a generally good knife and fork and trencher capacity were family essentials. Sir Harold was a strong, hearty man, of fine constitution; and though no *gourmand*, sufficiently endowed with the family characteristic not to be insensible to the charms of dining well, and in the Grosvenor Square house some of the best dinners in

London were eaten. Robert Mortimer possessed the rare art of giving dinners to perfection, and if there be truth in the saying of a great statesman, that "Knowing how to give good dinners is the first requisite in a diplomatist," then Robert Mortimer could claim a high place in the ranks of the diplomatic corps. The only thing his acquaintances wondered at was how he could afford to live as he did. They ate his dinners with great pleasure, drank his choice wines and praised their fine condition, admitted that his cook was an artist and a treasure, and asked of each other where the money came from. Certain gentlemen with hooked noses and horse-shoe pins in their neckcloths, Messrs. Moss and Davis, could have told something about it: they visited Grosvenor Square at intervals, taking away Robert Mortimer's signature in their breast pockets. Quiet men in respectably sombre clothes, the very opposites of the gentlemen of the hooked noses, did business, too, in the same line for a trifling consideration. It is the easiest thing in the world to get money—or "temporary accommodation," as the benevolent lenders call it—if you have position and expectations. Robert Mortimer always found it so, and he had a brother at his back who could not spend all his income. When his creditors became importunate he always applied to Sir Harold for "a loan." The Baronet called it paying his bill. He would say pleasantly to Miss Margaret, when they were safely shut in the chaise and driving down to Madingley, after a visit in town, "Well, Margaret, it's all over, and I'm glad of it. I have not come away without paying the bill, though;" and Miss Margaret, who was tender-hearted, would say, "Ah! it is only right to help poor Robert: he is so clever, and of course he must live in a certain style."

"He has had me for a lot, though, this time," Sir Harold would reply.

"Never mind, brother, you can spare it. You have nobody to save it for, and it will all be Robert's or Charlie's some day I suppose."

One morning at the latter end of April, among the letters the postman left at Robert Mortimer's house, was one with the Newmarket post-mark on the cover. It was from Sir Harold to Robert, saying he was coming up to town next day, and that his sister would come up from Madingley at the same time. It contained an enclosure, a note written in an irregular hand, addressed to Charles Mortimer,

Esq. Robert gave it to his son at the breakfast table.

"Oh! from Malton," he exclaimed.

The writer said to his "Dear Coz,"—"I am escaped away from old C." (Mr. Campbell) "and I am glad, for he keeps my nose down to the stone *eternally*" (the Marquis never acquired the art of spelling perfectly, though he improved very much). "Sir H. has taken me to Newmarket, and I like it awfully. Johnny Butler, the trainer, is here, and he has spot-ed winners for me. I shall come with Sir H. to stay with you. Old C. has gone to Cambridge. I hope he will *stop*. The big bay mare is a *perfect skeliton*, Johnny Butler says he can't make her out at all. Pecadillo was lame when we left Madingley. My Sky terrier has some pups; you may have one if you like. Mabel is to have the pick. We have—the coachman and me—had lots of shillings out of the new footman. We toss, 'odd man pay' for brandy and cigars, the way Brady taught us. We put up heads till his comes a tail, which, of course, it often does. I touch my head, then old Wills knows I mean 'heads' and we keep putting up heads, so *he must loose*. We won *7s. 6d.* of him on Sunday morning before we came to Newmarket. Johnny Butler says Sir H. used to bet very heavy. Now he never does." And the Marquis remained Master Charlie's affectionate cousin, and hoped he should find him all right when he came to town.

Sir Harold and his youthful ward arrived in town in due course. The Baronet always counted his season in London from the Newmarket First Spring Meeting to after the Derby week. To Ascot he always drove in state, in a coach and four, from Madingley,—the Chase being only a few miles distant from the royal Heath. Miss Margaret, accompanied by Mabel Despencer—Sir Harold's other charge—came up to Grosvenor Square; and so the family circle was made complete.

Robert Mortimer took an early opportunity of having a little conversation with Sir Harold upon a matter just then of great importance to him. They had dined. Miss Margaret and Mrs. Mortimer were alone in the drawing-room; the two brothers sat together over the wine. Sir Harold was warmed with that genial glow of benevolence which a good dinner produces in every true Englishman. Robert knew this was his opportunity. It was not in his nature to ask his brother in a straightforward way for the sum he wanted—he resorted to various little devices to prepare him for the demand. No man could be more

agreeable or could assume more pleasing manners than Robert Mortimer, when he chose to do so. He always commenced his attack upon that plain honest gentleman, his brother, by being complaisant even to complaisance—by introducing topics of conversation, in which he knew Sir Harold was interested. He would talk of Madingley—of the tenants, the crops, the rents; ask after their neighbours, and enlarge upon county politics; but his trump-card was the stud. Sir Harold, in his father's lifetime, had kept a few horses in training, and for a man who never had more than a dozen horses running in his colours, he had been eminently successful, having besides numerous cups, plates, and trophies, succeeded in carrying off the "blue riband" of the turf, with his bay colt, Peccadillo. With this triumph he was satisfied, and having scruples about selling his horses, he continued to train the best of them until they were old enough to retire to the paddocks on the laurels they had gained, where they were suffered to graze in peace to the end of their days. It was a source of regret to all followers of the sport that the "dark blue, light blue sleeves and cap," of Colonel Mortimer should be seen no more in the saddle, and that their gallant owner should become an inactive spectator of turf events. But Sir Harold had made up his mind to confine himself to keeping a few brood mares for the future; and he could not be persuaded by any of his old friends to swerve from his resolution. His heart, however, was still in the sport; and upon all the mysteries of blood, and pedigrees, and crosses, Sir Harold was a recognised authority. He would walk, or ride on his cob, over the hill to Malton Downs to have a talk to old Johnny Butler, who had a training stable there, and one of whose sons managed the Baronet's horses: or old Johnny, in a long drab overcoat coming down to his heels, drab breeches and gaiters, and a spotless white neckcloth with a little old-fashioned gold pin stuck in it, would drive into the stable-yard at the Chase, and have a glass of "home brewed," and ask to see Sir Harold, "just to tell what he heard say 'd win the great race," or to give his opinion upon an ailment that had made its appearance in one of the horses, always supposed to be "as sound as a roach." And he would not go away without "just puttin' his hand on Peccardilly," whom he had "broke an' trained an' run." "Ah!" honest John would say, "I never see such a horse as he is, neither before—nor since."

Robert Mortimer had amused Sir Harold

during dinner with his remarks on some of the topics before mentioned, and had saved his best card, as usual, till last. He helped himself to some claret, and passed the bottle to Sir Harold.

"I was very sorry to hear," he said, "that your old favourite, Peccadillo, is lame. Young Malton told Charlie so in an extraordinary, but characteristic, letter we got on the day you came up."

"Yes," said Sir Harold, "the old horse is lame, and we can't make out where the lameness is. I think it is in the shoulder, but Butler says it is not."

"What are you doing for it?" asked Robert, affecting to be greatly interested.

"Well," replied Sir Harold, "we have tried all sorts of things. We have had his shoe off—it's his near fore leg—and we have bandaged and bathed and fomented; but I hear he is not any sounder yet."

"Oh, dear!" said Robert, "perhaps it is in the shoulder."

"I am afraid so."

"Ellis, the vet., has seen him, I suppose?"

"Yes; and he has tried some stuff he heard recommended."

"Hopplem——" Robert began.

"No," said the Baronet, interrupting him. "Neu—neu—neurash, something or other."

"Neurasthenipposkelesterizo," said Robert, quickly, having the word very pat.

"Ah!" exclaimed Sir Harold, "that's it; about twenty syllables. I don't think it does any good, though. They have got a testimonial from the Duke of A——, though, if he really wrote it——"

"I know—I have seen it; it is a fine specimen of ducal English in the construction of the sentences. I should say from internal evidence it is perfectly genuine."

Sir Harold laughed heartily at this little sally of his brother's. Robert was rapidly working him up to the right pitch. They had some more chat about the horses, in which the Member for Malton took the opportunity of consulting Sir Harold on several points, having reference to pedigree and stamina and age and the proper lengths of courses; for, he said, the question of Queen's Plates was likely to come under the consideration of the House at an early date, and he should like to have Sir Harold's opinion on all these subjects, as he meant to speak. He thought the public money was wasted when one horse could pick up these plates all over the country. What did Sir Harold think about it? Would he be willing to give evidence before a Parliamentary

Committee, and so forth? Having got down to the House, as it were, it was an easy step to broach the subject of the coming general election and the expenses attendant thereon.

"But your election will not cost you much," said Sir Harold.

"Well, not very much, I hope," replied Robert.

"Very likely there won't be any contest at Malton at all," Sir Harold suggested.

Robert hoped there would not.

"It doesn't cost you much if there is a contest?"

"Not directly," said Robert.

"How indirectly?" asked his brother.

"Oh! in various ways, as you would find out if you stood," Robert answered, standing up and tapping his trousers' pocket in a very suggestive manner. I know I feel the expense of the last one to this day. True, it was not so very long ago, and now we are going to be treated to another."

"Oh! well," said Sir Harold, rattling the silver in his own pocket.

Robert waited for something more practical. But Sir Harold sat playing with his wine glass and the *débris* of his dessert, making little mounds on his plate and then levelling them again. After rather an awkward pause, Robert said:—

"My expenses get heavier every year. That boy will be a great expense. I suppose I must send him to a public school."

"Yes, the best thing that can be done to make a man of him. Mr. Campbell advises me to send Malton to school. Harrow, he suggests—so they can go together."

"I don't know where to begin to economize," said Robert, recalling his brother from the digression. "I know one thing," he added, abruptly, "I'm never out of debt." And he purposely assumed a very blank look.

"Well, well," said Sir Harold, "how much is it this time?"

Of course Robert did not tell his brother a tithe of what he owed; embarrassed people never do make quite a clean breast of it; but he asked Sir Harold to lend him a good round sum, which the worthy gentleman without the slightest hesitation consented to do. The loans Robert Mortimer obtained some half a dozen times in the year from Sir Harold, were like the sixpences Johnson borrowed sometimes of his Scotch friend. They proceeded on the principle of "Bozzy, lend me sixpence *not* to be repaid." Though with this difference, that the stout hearted moralist and grammarian boldly stated "the principles of the business," when he

demanded the accommodation; while Robert Mortimer always made a pretence of paying some day or other. Perhaps on the advent of the Greek Kalends, or when he was made Prime Minister. There was, however, a tacit understanding between the brothers that these loans were gifts; the tribute of wealth and affection to talent in distressed circumstances. If Sir Harold had been blessed with children of his own, the case might have been different, but in the expectation of Robert, or certainly Robert's son, one day quietly taking possession of Madingley, he took a lenient view of the rapid rate at which a younger son's portion had been dissipated, and bore the demands and honoured the claims of the Member for Malton with very even good temper. He looked upon it as his duty to be Robert's banker, on occasion, and he was one who never struck a balance of the accounts standing between the two.

"By Jove!" said Robert to his wife, that night, "my brother Harold is a trump! He's the best fellow in the world. If your old governor would only behave as he ought, I could get along very well."

Mrs. Mortimer was a languid spiritless lady, much given to headaches and general depression of spirits: she had fine melting brown eyes, and these were inherited by her son. Charlie was the only object of her affection, and she never in her life refused him anything it was in her power to grant him, or did more than offer the very mildest remonstrance when he was in fault. Miss Margaret, who was a lady of very kind heart and endowed with very good sense, divided her affections pretty equally between her nephew, Charlie, and Mabel Despencer. She liked the young Malton well enough; but generally predicted that not much good would ever be made of him.

Mrs. Mortimer was too languishing a lady to have the energy required for picking a quarrel with anyone; she took things as they came, in her listless way, and showed little interest in any events occurring about her. She and Miss Margaret got on pretty well together, as she was disposed to resign herself to her senior's guidance, and usually complied with any proposal Miss Margaret made to her, providing always that it did not involve too much trouble to herself. She was seldom equal to any considerable exertion before three or four o'clock in the day, taking her breakfast in bed, and then reclining on the sofa in her boudoir and complaining of her nerves and her headaches. When she did feel strong enough

to go out for the air, a drive in the Park, or a visit to Bond Street and Regent Street, or the business of leaving a few cards at the houses of her acquaintances, gave her sufficient excuse for a day or two's rest after such violent exercise.

Her husband did not often trouble her with his society, as she generally received his sarcastic remarks about the old Whig banker, her father, with a copious flow of tears: if his wife was in her place at the head of his table when his friends dined with him, Robert Mortimer was perfectly content to forgive her any other attendance upon his commands. Once or twice a year her father and her stepmother, who was a little younger than herself, paid a visit to Grosvenor Square, and a very pleasant party it was, both for hosts and guests. Robert Mortimer paying off old scores by saying sharp things to the banker, which, though he failed to understand, he knew were aimed at him well enough, and resented them accordingly by a very sullen and implacable demeanour. With a mother so often an invalid, and a father occupied so much with his own business, Master Charlie was left a great deal to himself. When at Madingley he spent a deal of his time with Malton, lounging about the stables, and making friends of the grooms and servants, who taught them some very bad tricks. In town, Brady had charge of them to a great extent, took them into the Park for a walk or a ride, calling by the way at a coal-yard, where he would back a horse for himself or for the coachman for a "sov," and put a crown on for the boys out of their pocket-money. Or they would go into a favourite house of call of his in a back street in Mayfair, and treat the company there to beer out of their private funds, and hear and see a great deal of which Robert Mortimer knew nothing. So it would happen, naturally enough, that they found their way into the Row at four o'clock of a fine afternoon in the season, and enjoyed the pleasure of having a canter under the trees; or another day they would go at twelve or one for a ride and drive with the two ladies in the afternoon, though Malton, who was a couple of years older than Charlie Mortimer, commonly protested against this as slow and a bore, saying that he "hated to be tied by a string to a parcel of old women." Old Victor, too, often went at the Doctor's behest to the Park with Master Reginald. The pony was in some considerable danger of having his long tail ridden off, if there be any truth in the statement that ponies do sometimes lose their

tails from this cause. At all events, he did not often remain idle in his stable for a day in the fine weather. Thus, our two heroes often met on the soft "going" under the shade of the trees, and were perfectly familiar with each other's appearance. Master Charlie and Malton had a groom in attendance generally, riding after their worships in the Mortimer livery on a smart nag from the Madingley stables—of course Sir Harold found horses for his brother—while Reginald's attendant, the faithful Victor, walked by his side till they got out of the streets, when he was soon left behind and had to wait patiently until such time as Reginald thought fit to come back to him.

One day when the boys, from meeting regularly in their rides, had advanced so far towards acquaintance, as to stare well at one another when they passed, instead of staring very hard at the animals they severally bestrode—which occurrence marks a distinct stage in the process of recognition between two young gentlemen—Master Charles Mortimer, having given vent to his manly feelings in the matter of horsemanship, by galloping at a pace unwarranted by his skill in maintaining his place in the middle of his saddle, unluckily lost his hold upon one of his stirrups and was just on the point of falling into the soft newly watered gravel, when he came to the spot at the end of the Ride where old Victor was standing by the side of Reginald's pony. His spirited little animal had by this time slackened its speed, and was easily stopped by the old French servant, who put the young gentleman's foot into his stirrup again and made him a very polite bow, and gave him an equally polite caution against going too fast in future.

Reginald and Charlie were smiling at one another, when Brady and the groom came up to the spot. Regy rode quietly away in the direction of home. Charlie Mortimer looking after him exclaimed—

"I wonder who that fellow is. He is here every day. The old boy just stopped my rascally pony in time."

"How should I know who he is?" asked Brady.

"None of your larks here, Mr. Brady, if you please," cried Charlie Mortimer, looking slyly at his father's confidential man. "You told Malton you did know who he was."

"Did I," replied Brady. "Well, perhaps I did know then, and perhaps I didn't. Perhaps I have forgotten if I did know."

"Oh! you haven't forgotten, Mr. Brady."

"Well, then, I haven't," answered Brady, with a mysterious look, implying secrecy.

"He is a out and out young—Viper—that's what he is, and he can sting to some tune. Mind you never let the governor know as I said a word about him to you, or there'll be a fine row, I can tell you."

"None of your stupid nonsense, Brady. He looks like a very jolly fellow, and isn't half such a viper as you are yourself. What do you want to cram me with such a tale as that for?" he added, as he saw the carriage, with his mother and Miss Margaret in it, coming slowly down the drive, and rode off to give them a nod as they passed.

CHAPTER X.

THE DOCTOR'S CHARITY.

NUMBERLESS were the kind actions and charitable deeds of the Good Uncle. Around Bartholomew Square is a large and very poor district, and here among the needy, the sick and the helpless, the figure of Dr. Gasc was familiar to many who stood sorely in want of comfort and help. Whose heart was so tender—whose sympathies were so wide as the good Doctor's? Quietly and unostentatiously he did his good work; in this place applying his medical skill, in that, administering consolation or dispensing relief. Truly of his bounties it might be said, that he let not his left hand know of what his right hand did. Sometimes with Reginald by his side, sometimes alone, at others with Lavelle, he visited the wretched and poverty-stricken abodes of his poorer fellows, passing the threshold of misery and sickness like a ministering angel at their gates. He was no respecter of persons, and knew no distinction of creed or race in his good offices. Suffering humanity he always did his best to aid and succour. Nothing pleased him better than to see Reginald deny himself some boyish gratification, in order that he might instead do some little act of charity. He and the Doctor would often go off together, with medicines and wines, giving pence to hungry children on their way. The Good Uncle never could deny himself the pleasure of giving, and almost invariably came home with empty pockets, but if they were emptied of his loose silver, his heart was filled to overflowing with the gentle spirit of charity. Madam used often to scold him, and indeed rate him soundly, for his want of carefulness; but he was too old and hardened an offender to mend his ways under the lash of Madam's ready tongue and prudent counsels.

Mrs. Grafton, at whose house in Wilderness

Row, Reginald was born on that first of January, the events of which were detailed in the prologue, had been the recipient of the Doctor's bounty, and she had had the charge of the boy during the two first years of his life, before he was transferred to the care of Madam McCara. It has been mentioned that his mother inquired for Dr. Gasc, and although the Doctor had never been able to discover the nature of her acquaintance with his name, or the reason of her inquiry, it had the effect of making him take an interest in her orphan son, which led ultimately to his adopting him as his own. He had on various occasions given assistance to Mrs. Grafton, partly on account of her early connection with Reginald; and when the house was sold and she was served with a notice to quit, he had supplied her with the means of taking the lease and furniture of a large house in that capital letting neighbourhood, Upper Gore Street. One lodger had followed her thither from Wilderness Row; he had lived with her for some years, and had a notion that he could not make himself comfortable or feel thoroughly at home anywhere but under Mrs. Grafton's roof. Job Grafton and he had been great friends, and drained many a tankard together when they were in funds. His name was Robert Grobey, called Bob in the profession generally, for he was an actor, and delineated a pleasing variety of characters at an East-end theatre. He was at this time what is called a "general utility" man, and was ready to go on as anything in the world on the shortest possible notice. He was, however, steadily rising in his own branch of the profession, under the favour of the "gods"—whose applause at his exits was often tumultuous—until a rheumatic fever laid him low, and very nearly took him away from the stage altogether. He had enacted a favourite part of his, a desperately terrible villain, in a fine old-fashioned melo-drama, full of thunder, and the bloodiest of murders, on the very night on which he caught the cold that led to his illness. It was unaccountable to those who knew him, that so honest and good-natured a fellow as Bob Grobey should have such a strong professional penchant for tragedy and villains. It was well worth the two shillings charged for admission to the Dress Circle, to see him play the villain—not your wretched half-blown scoundrel, but a villain over head and ears. As the wicked German Baron, or the wild Italian brigand, firing pistols, carrying on broadsword combats, and ranting away all the while at the top of his voice, Robert Grobey was terribly effective. His make up was com-

plete; he was a real Corsair in his brigand's hat with a long feather in it, doublet, breeches, buff boots, and white leather gloves: his sallow cheeks, coated with pomatum and burnt cork, with a few touches of yellow ochre for the high lights. A child of the sun, who owned a monkey and an organ, and often patronized the house at which Grobey appeared, has declared in the hearing of credible witnesses that, "until Signor Grobey open his mouth and speak-ee Grobeese, I not know him from de real nateef."

But his horseshair curls had been laid by for some considerable time, for he had had a sharp attack, through which he had been nursed by Mrs. Grafton. Dr. Gasc had visited him in Upper Gore Street from time to time, and now, with Reginald, was making a last call on his convalescent patient. Poor Bob was very grateful for all the Doctor's kindness, and spoke of paying when he could. But the Doctor told him he had long ceased to take a fee. The actor looked gloomily at the future, for he had in his illness been compelled to raise funds by "putting away," as he called it, the greater portion of his wardrobe. As the Good Uncle left, he pressed an envelope addressed to Grobey into Mrs. Grafton's hand. Tears of joy and gratitude stood in the player's eyes when Mrs. Grafton handed to him the Doctor's loan, a sum more than sufficient for his requirements.

He vowed he would repay it out of his earnings in three months—and he did so.

Of these, and such like good actions, was the Doctor's daily life made up.

Grobey never forgot his kindness, and once in after life had an opportunity of doing the Doctor service.

SNAKES AND SNAKE-BITES.

BETWEEN eastern Bengal and Burmah is a secluded valley, in which is situated a small city called Munnipoor. The Raja of the place is a Naga by descent, and prides himself on having a serpent as ancestor. According to the old legends, the chief channel of descent to the serpent kingdom existed in this spot, and it is probably on the strength of the legend that the Raja claims serpent ancestry. He has also the advantage of being in tangible possession of worldly dignity while his very venerable, but remarkably unpleasant, ancestor is still in existence; for, according to the current rumour, this local grandee's throne is established over a small cavity in a rock, in which his respected ancestor leads a secluded

and uneventful life. Superstition is still so rampant in the East, that stories as wildly absurd as the above obtain credence with an enormous mass of the people. Certain learned professors go so far as to say that the worship of the serpent was the primæval religion of mankind. Throughout the continent of India traces of its great antiquity and ubiquity are very numerous; and the traditions of the Jews are no mean support in favour of this view. The selection of the serpent as the instrument for the fall of man in the gardens of Paradise, shows that it was regarded as the object of fear, if not of veneration; and the miraculous cure of the snake-bitten Israelites in the desert, by the means of the image of the brazen serpent, may be advanced in favour of the idea. In later days, while we have managed to discard our veneration, we still hold an equally instinctive dread of the reptile. Whether the events connected with the story of man's fall have had any effect in strengthening the natural repulsion felt by men in general to the serpent kind, may be kept an open question.

A very large number of the family of serpents are harmless. This does not mend matters much, for those which are innocuous live in the same localities with those which are deadly; and as it is impossible, in the moment of hasty contact, to distinguish between the different kinds, the harmless snakes do not enjoy the immunity from our distrust to which they are entitled. A man who steps upon, or close to, a coiled-up snake, and becomes aware of its proximity only just in time to avoid its bite, is not usually in a position to scrutinize or discriminate between it and other types of the same family. He becomes suddenly aware that he may be confronting a very deadly peril, and his first impulse leads him to avoid or parry the imminent attack; while his second prompts him to slay the offender who has caused him the alarm. He does not pause to consider that he was the real offender, and that if he had not assailed the household gods of the snake with his heavy, aggressive foot, the snake would have experienced no wish to annoy him; but, on the other hand, would have remained thankfully and cosily coiled up; and undemonstrative man has very great reason for congratulating himself that snakes are not active enemies, recognising in man a natural prey. Were this the case in snake-infested countries, they would lead at least a very harassed and precarious life. A snake bent upon prey moves with such total noiselessness, avails himself of such improbable avenues

of access, makes his presence known in such unlooked-for localities, that he is a most dangerous and a not easily excluded enemy. His power lies in his capability of introducing himself where his will leads him without attracting attention. Once in position his deadly attack renders escape impossible, for the dart of a snake is quick as a flash of lightning. It cannot, however, save him from an equally fatal revenge. Once discovered, no antagonist is easier to deal with than a snake. The largest cobra can be effectually settled with a small cane smartly applied to his spine. A boa-constrictor or python might require more deadly weapons; but they are not poisonous, and their immense size hinders them from intruding without incurring observation.

India has acquired a high reputation as a snake-infested country, and not without reason. It is not peculiar in this respect. All tropical climates are plagued in a similar manner. Among the long list of snakes which naturalists have classified, the world-renowned cobra-di-capella claims precedence. Next to him in death-dealing power is a much smaller type known throughout India by Englishmen as the "Kerite." The bite of both these kinds is so fatal that there is really little to choose between them. The cobra, from its superior size, has greater strength, greater reach, and greater powers of penetration. On the other hand, the kerite can move undetected more easily, and can obtain an entrance where its large congener would be excluded. Popular opinion has, however, decided in giving the palm for obnoxiousness to the cobra. Both species are common over the greater part of India. Personally I have met them in Bengal, the North Western Provinces, and the Punjab. Nevertheless, it is a striking fact that a person may live years in India without meeting either the one or the other. Of course the sportsman comes across them most frequently. His tastes and occupations lead him into the strongholds of the serpent world. Knowing this, he takes every precaution for the protection of his nether extremities. If these are rendered bite-proof, little is to be feared from the most deadly of the tribe, and consequently they are little regarded, and if objectionable, speedily destroyed. I have made the acquaintance of a sportsman, who declared to me as a matter of fact, that in one morning's snipe shooting in the rice fields of a very "snakey" district of Bengal, he and his companion counted between them twenty-seven cobras. The precise accuracy which he and his friend displayed in their arithmetic in a sport like snipe-

shooting, which absorbs the attention of the hand and eye to such a high degree, is extremely creditable, but not equally credible, and has led me to receive the details of the morning's sport with some slight reserve; and I am therefore induced to consider that the impression on the mind of the narrator was so vivid, that he could not account for it without advancing, as his opinion, that he and his friend *must* have seen no less than twenty-seven cobras. It is simply a question of "nervous" arithmetic (if I may be allowed the phrase): received, an impression of such and such a strength; required, to account for it. The problem is easily solved. In the mental scales first place the impression, then into the opposite scale place imaginary cobras until the balance is adjusted.

Inhabitants, however, of large cantonments whose tastes do not lead them into forest-land and swamps, may pass a decade of their existence without seeing the tail of a snake. Most men, however, have a tale (no wretched joke is intended) or two to tell of their experience. One has found a member of the serpent tribe "at home" on his return from dinner. Another has discovered a cobra preparing to share his bed for the night. A third has been driven to snake-slaughter before being permitted undisputed possession of his slippers. A fourth has been enlivened by a musical hiss upon lifting up an earthen jar in his bathing-room for the purposes of ablution: and so on. The main point in each story is the imminence of the danger escaped and possibly the presence of mind with which the story-teller, according to his own statements, averted almost certain destruction—as if he said, "I assure you it was a most dangerous situation, my dear fellow, and I feel sure most people (meaning you in particular) would have lost their heads; but I did just the right thing at the right moment, and here I am, an example of intrepidity, still alive."

It is only the story-fancier who collects the various anecdotes into the garner of his mind who can really do justice to the misanthropy and cunning of these storied serpents and the ingenuity of their intended victims. No place is too elevated or too remote for his habitation. He is equally at home on the house-top, or on the floor; nestling comfortably in the pendent thatch, or reposing in coiled *abandon* below the carpet; equally content with the moisture of the bathing room as with the crisper comforts of a blazing fire in the short cold season of India. Another point which strikes the connoisseur in such stories is the

invariable deadliness of such intruders. No man ever finds a harmless snake interfering with his domestic joys. If a snake be small, he is a "kerite"; if larger, a "cobra." In the latter case he usually makes a large display of his hood, and the story-teller, if tested by a searching catechism of cross-examination, paralyses further inquiry by detailing how the noxious animal expanded his hood in the most threatening manner, and therefore must have been a cobra. One feels almost surprised that he did not share the fate of the illustrious Rufus Dawes and his avenger Philip Slingsby, and disappear bodily within the fearful portals of the cavernous hood. Of course, incredulity—avowed incredulity, at least—is silenced after such identification by means of the hood; and the race of cobras is accredited with another dastardly attempt on the lives of the lords of creation. Now, when one considers the probabilities, one cannot help being sceptical of the deadly animosity displayed by the venomous kinds. I have not a sufficiently accurate knowledge of natural history to state, even approximately, the number of the species of the serpent family which exist in India, nor can I even hazard any suggestion as to the proportion between the noxious and the innocuous kinds. Fortunately this knowledge is not essential in justifying scepticism. It is enough if we state generally that there are very many species, and that among them a majority, I believe, are very nearly, if not quite, harmless. Moreover, that there is no established law of nature which ordains that the two most poisonous kinds should seek an uninvited familiarity with the human race which is not sought for by their fellows.

If we think this over quietly, we cannot help being struck with the vast improbability of the *entire* accuracy in this particular of all the story-tellers, and we are induced to believe that the instances are not infrequent where the hood of the cobra, so threateningly brandished in the very face of the narrator, exists more in his imagination than in actual fact. As a further support of this view, my own experience as to the relative proportions between the harmless and poisonous types is very confirmatory. During a somewhat lengthened residence in India, I have only once met a snake impudent enough to wish to share my quarters, as an uninvited guest and without an offer of a share in the expenses. He was a little serpent (therefore by the grand rule in such matters, a kerite) and had ensconced himself comfortably close to the door, and the light in the room revealed his presence immediately

the door was opened. He was so small, and seemed so little to dispute my entrance, that after the first shock I was very little concerned for my personal safety, but I was none the less alive to the advantage of speedily annihilating the possibly venomous intruder. My presence of mind was gigantic. Scorning meaner weapons, I flew to my sword, and, hastily unsheathing the bright cavalry sabre, I rushed to the conflict brandishing the naked blade. The result was such as might have been expected. The little vermin apparently only half awake had but slight chance in the unequal strife. Suddenly realizing the impending danger, it sought safety in flight, but the avenging blade stayed its further progress, and in less than one minute the repeated blows of my powerful weapon had made it a corpse; a wriggling writhing corpse—but still in effect a corpse; and my maiden blade had received its bloody baptism in victory.

I have frequently recounted this adventure, which occurred in my early days, and I plead guilty to having defined the victim to my valour as a kerite. I acted sincerely in this—I believed at the time it was a kerite. I had no means of identifying it as a kerite, but I felt a moral conviction it must have been one. It could not have been a cobra, it was too small; it must therefore have been a kerite. By this rule, if by no other, its identity was established. Did I not know that all my friends who had experienced similar adventures had been assailed either by the one or the other, and was I to be a miserable exception, doomed in my mortal terror to flesh my sword for the first time upon a writhing harmless vermin? Perish the thought! Surely the kerite theory is the only one tenable; and so I then considered it, but a longer experience and calmer reflection has somewhat shaken my belief in the logic which had established this fact in my mind. And I now hesitate to declare positively that it was a kerite, while, at the same time, I still maintain that it *may* have been one. Lately I have been residing in a famous snake station, a place of which all Indian residents say "you can't go out of doors without seeing a snake," and by inference "a cobra." I have also had the unenviable lot of residing in the most snake-infested house in this snake-famed station; I may claim therefore to be somewhat of an authority in serpentology. It was currently reported that the former occupant of the building was driven out of it by the pressing attentions of his serpent fellow-lodgers; for, according to some, cobras made a practice of falling from the roof, vying with each other

in their attempt to alight on the crown of the occupant's head, much in the same way as a schoolboy drops a stone over a cliff or down a well, with a view to hit some object at the bottom.

To a certain extent the predictions of my Indian friends were fulfilled, though not to the letter. In the short space of less than a fortnight I saw no less than eight snakes, but four of them were encountered out shooting, and the remainder in the grass plots round the house. The singular point is that not one of these eight were members of a poisonous family. One measured six feet six inches, and if encountered in one's bath-room, or side by side with one's gold watch under the pillows, I have no doubt it would have figured as a gigantic cobra; still, when viewed in the open air, and killed under circumstances uninvested with a tinge of romance, it had to be classed as a "Dharmin," a large grass-snake, pretty to look upon, and quite harmless.

While thus deprecating the wholesale introduction of venomous snakes into everyday stories—a predilection which has peculiar charms for the native mind—I candidly confess that the numbers of the deadly kinds are sufficiently numerous to cause much calamity. Natives suffer much more than Europeans. The houses of Europeans are elevated, clean, and well-watched: those of the natives are the reverse in every particular. The locality of native habitations is, as a rule, eminently unfavourable. They usually walk about with naked feet; and their habits are, in many ways, such as to bring them in frequent contact with snakes. Occasionally one is startled by hearing instances of snake-bite, eventuating in death, in the middle of populous cities, where it would have been impossible, one would have thought, for a snake to penetrate. Such cases may sometimes be accounted for by the presence of snake-charmers, who, through carelessness, may have permitted one of their noisome brood to escape. Such a supposition will not, however, answer in every case; and I apprehend that it is an undoubted fact, that snakes do occasionally penetrate into the very middle of populous towns. But usually such accidents take place in more thinly inhabited districts, and generally in the dark. A woman goes to a well to draw water; on her return, down a dark lane, she becomes aware that she has been bitten by a snake. When she comes into the light, the mark of a small puncture on the ankle or foot is visible, and in two or three hours she is a corpse. Or a labourer may be working in the

rice-fields, and be bitten in the hand or body with the same fatal result. There is no doubt that in the worst districts they are a terrible scourge.

But still, frequently as death from snake-bite among natives occurs, there are very many cases which are looked upon as *bonâ fide*, which happen really from quite a different cause. There are two kinds of death in India which are made to cover a vast amount of crime and cruelty. These are alleged cases of suicide, and deaths from snake-bite. Natives, and especially native women, do very often commit suicide upon very trifling provocation. In the first place, fear of death is not a powerful feeling among them; and, besides, many seem to care less for life than we do, among other causes, possibly because it is not a very enviable one—and there is much of misery in their lot; whatever the cause, they commit suicide on very trifling incentives. Both modes of death, however, offer very great facilities for the concealment of crime, and full advantage is taken of the fact. A murder is committed—if by poison, a snake has done it; if by drowning, by suffocation, &c., it is a case of "found drowned," and a verdict of *felo de se* is returned.

Snake-charmers, by their constant familiarity with snakes of the most deadly kind, and their power of controlling them by the aid of music, have obtained a considerable amount of influence over the poorer classes of the people; and this is not always exerted in at all a salutary manner. The poor ignorant superstitious wretches who form so large a portion of every village, seeing these men possess an apparently magical influence over reptiles for which they feel the greatest terror, are easily led to believe that they are gifted with superhuman powers. A case of this kind came before the Indian public only a short time ago, which was remarkable for the heartless cruelty which distinguished the conduct of the snake-charmers, and for the utter absence of any reasonable motive for its perpetration. In a village in Bengal, two snake-charmers made their appearance, residing for some time and performing the tricks of their trade. Of course, they attracted much attention, and at last persuaded some of the young men to be initiated into the mysteries of the art. Accordingly, four men who were anxious to become pupils began their lessons. The two snake-charmers and their victims (for they can be called nothing else) took their seats upon the ground in a circle. A fine "kerite" was produced from one of the baskets, and

for some time kept under control by its masters, to whom it was perfectly obedient. The pupils were then encouraged to familiarize themselves with the snake. They were exhorted to have no fear of the snake, as if bitten they could be cured by the antidotes in their possession. The young men, in spite of these reassuring promises, were somewhat timid; but being urged more strongly they took greater liberties than were approved of by the snake, who, roused to resentment, bit neophyte No. 1. The teachers exhorted him to care nothing, and applied one of their professed antidotes, at the same time explaining that until each had been bitten they could proceed but little on the path of knowledge. Finally, neophytes Nos. 2, 3, and 4 were also bitten. In time the poison commenced to circulate through the system, and in two or three hours three out of the four were dead, and the fourth hanging between life and death. He finally recovered, owing probably to the virus of the snake having been exhausted by his three previous attacks. The rascally snake-charmers were seized. I have been unable to discover their ultimate fate; but it is to be hoped that, although poetical justice is forbidden in these prosaic days, they will expiate their crime in some way or another. The above is a most striking instance of the virulence of the poison of this deadly reptile. He is seldom found three feet in length—generally much smaller—yet his bite proved fatal to three full-grown men in succession, and laid a fourth at death's door. Not a bad mortality bill for one little snake. *Cave cauem* has a world-wide signification. How much more significant in tropical countries would be the caution of *cave anguem*.

THE "BLUES."

IN this age of speculation, of "colossal fortunes," and of still more colossal failures, of telegrams from one end of the world to the other, of competitive examinations, of big dinners; in this age, when every one seems bent on doing the utmost amount of "strutting on the stage," that can be squeezed into his limited time of appearance, there are few or none, who have not had their moments of reaction, who have not gloomily pondered over the *vanitas vanitatum* of Ecclesiastes, who have not regarded their most cherished schemes with disgust, who have not experienced, in short, a fit of the "blues."

No complaint excites less sympathy, and,

except those actually threatening life, deserves more.

Without feeling positively ill, the victim undergoes a sort of collapse, during which, all action, all thoughts, all feelings seem to become dormant, save a sentiment of intense disgust towards things in general. The worst of it is, that once in such a state, the sufferer, unless very strong-minded, makes no effort to get out of it. A day's shooting, a ride across country, even a long walk would do much to dispel the gloomy mist in which he is enveloped. But no; with a kind of morbid vanity he says, "Now I can appreciate things at their true value, now I see the hollowness of the world and all that therein is, now I comprehend the only truth under the sun,—'all is vanity';" and arrives eventually at the comfortable conclusion that he is a brute, but the rest of mankind are greater brutes still.

To bring on an attack of this malady, commence by leading a life of strong excitement for some months. Anything will do, so long as it is exciting. Try dabbling in stocks, the turf and London season, followed by Baden Baden; a complex love affair, or if your tendencies are religious, revivalism may answer the purpose. Immediately after this career of dissipation, retire to some country place where there is no hunting, no shooting, no society. But you say, "No matter, I am a man of mind; I have but to fall back on my mental resources." Very well, enter upon a course of thought and study, which will only serve to accelerate the reaction that is inevitably approaching, and you will soon throw your books across the room and subside into a state of torpor, compared with which the lowest vegetable would seem a model of liveliness. Oh! the misery of awaking in the morning and knowing that you are about to enter upon a day, which, according to all human probability, will be exactly like its predecessor, and equally like its successor.

Why, Seneca himself, after writing the most noble sentiments that uninspired man ever conceived—so noble, indeed, that they bear the closest resemblance to Scripture—even Seneca, on being exiled to some dull place far from his beautiful gardens and the brilliant society of Rome, yielded to the "blues," and at their suggestion wrote a truckling letter to Nero, which has ever rested as a stain on his fame as a philosopher.

Yet these "blues," which thus lower a man's whole moral system, dry up all the milk of human kindness in his nature, and render him a burden to himself and all around him, are

regarded as a less ailment than the tooth-ache. Friends look in, and either go off with the remark, "What a gloomy fellow that Smith is—I do like a cheery bird ;" or else, by way of lightening him up, and perhaps of showing off their own superior liveliness and spirits, straightway indulge in efforts of facetiousness and loud laughs, which have about the same effect on the patient as a salvo of artillery on a man with delirium tremens. One class of friend is indeed insufferable ; I mean the hale, hearty, noisy, robust fellow, who is never ill. He bursts into the room like a blustering north-east wind, and invariably begins drawing comparisons between your respective physiques, and usually winds up with the assertion that for his part he does not even know the meaning of indigestion and low spirits. This description of Job's comforter I had always quailed before, and listened to with submission, until one happy day I read a passage in De Quincey, of which I will quote a few lines. After mentioning this style of man, he goes on to say,—

"On thus vaunting their strength of stomach, they are at the same time proclaiming its coarseness, and showing themselves unaware that precisely those, whom such coarseness of organization reprieves from immediate and seasonable reaction of suffering, are the favourite subjects of that heavier reaction which takes the shape of *delirium tremens*, of *palsy*, and of *lunacy*."

Oh, the soothing effect of those lines ! Ever since, I have met these robust irrepressible men with a sense of superiority rather than of inferiority, of pity rather than of envy, and mentally answered their boastings with the reflection, "*N'importe, mon ami*, I have hopes of seeing you in a straight waistcoat yet."

Your own family are worse : with the freedom of relations, they will plunge into the argument with "What, moping again." But the wife of your bosom will probably attain to the most ingenious mode of torture. She will insist upon treating you as an invalid, and will admonish the children, in an audible whisper, not to disturb poor papa, who is not quite the thing ; which is really equivalent to saying, "My dears, don't make a noise, as your papa is horribly cross." Finally, she will succeed in making you use language that a new dress or a box at the opera can alone atone for, and will cause your startled "olive branches" to regard their parent stem as a most crabbed old trunk.

Now for a suggestion for the cure of these coloured imps. Even if I had any faith in

those quack remedies which now-a-days take up half the advertising media, I should not have the pluck to confess it, lest what I have written should be regarded as an elaborate puff, and be included in the same category as those absurd stories in the American papers, which commence by the relation of some terrible tragedy, and wind up with the triumphant and, according to them, indisputable fact, that the entire catastrophe might have been averted by a single bottle of "Radway's Ready Relief," or "Giamelli's Royal Italian Bitters." Fortunately my antidote lies solely in exercise, accompanied, of course, with moderation in diet and temperate habits. Leave off mental work, play rackets, ride, or walk twenty miles a day for a week, and you will get up in the morning with those long lost sensations of your school days, when the mere fact of existence, accompanied though it were with lessons, impositions and lickings, was in itself a source of full and grateful enjoyment.

THE ABBESS OF MARLOW.*

I.

MARLOW'S Abbess is fair to see,
Marlow's Abbess is young in years ;
And she weeps in her chamber when none are by :
But they are not penitential tears.

She wears a relic against her heart—
A relic that others never see ;
'Tis a simple gem in a golden ring :
No symbol that of sanctity.

The abbey lands are wide and rich,
Silver and gold its coffers fill ;
Rich are the gifts that grace the shrine,
But something the abbess sighs for still :

Sighs for, but never utters her thought ;
And her cheek grows pale and eye grows dim ;
But the Lady Abbess is she through all,
And her voice is sweet in the solemn hymn.

Two by two, in the early dawn—
The mist lies white where the stream doth flow,—
Two by two, on their sleek-paced mules,
From Marlow Abbey the sisters go.

The mowers, mowing the field hard by,
Stay the swish of the whetted scythe,
As the passing train looms out through the mist,
And they hear the mule-bells ringing blithe.

* This story is told in Dr. Doran's "Court and Society, from Elizabeth to Anne," vol. i., p. 263.

Two by two, the sisterhood go,
And the lark springs up from out the grass;
And browsing cattle their sleek heads turn,
And solemnly gaze as the train doth pass.

For Bisham the holy sisters are bound,
For Bisham, where proud Earl Salisbury
Holds solemn rite for the good success
Of his journey into a far country;

And the Lady Abbess, his daughter fair,
To join the pomp of her father's rite,
Has ridden forth with her sober train,
From the abbey walls, in the morning light.

II.

Bisham Abbey was bright that day,
With flash of armour and glow of gold,
With gorgeous robes and glimmer of gems,
As the solemn anthem swelled and rolled.

The chant was sung, and the incense burnt,
The knights' swords blessed, and the rite was done;
Each made his vow, and the stately train,
With its pride and pomp and glitter, was gone.

The Lady Abbess was pale to see,
As she came in at the chapel door;
But the Lady Abbess was burning red,
As red as a rose, when the rite was o'er.

She sits in her chamber and smiles to herself,
And kisses the relic that she doth wear—
The little gem in the ring of gold,—
And life seems not so hard to bear.

III.

The proud Earl sits at the table's head,
His heart grows warm with the red, red wine;
"We'll pledge a toast, on this night of nights,
We'll pledge a toast, O comrades mine!"

He fills his goblet, and glances round
At the row of faces to left and right:
But where is Sir Guy, that he is not here,
To hold the revel with us this night?"

They looked askance in each others' eyes:
"Can no friend say why he is not here?"
Then one, who twisted his chain of gold,
Arose and spake, but as though in fear:

"My Lord, there is one without, who says,
In the moonlight, riding, he met the knight,
And seated behind was a lady fair;
He says—but he may not say aright—"

"Her name! her name! speak forth her name!"
"My Lord, I cannot believe it truth;
But he says that the lady who rode behind
Was the Lady Abbess, and more the ruth!"

"Ho! boot and saddle!" the great Earl cried,
"Ho! boot and saddle! Spur fast, spur fast!
By the rood, I swear, they shall both repent
Before this summer night is past."

The horses are out, the swords girt on,
The cup, half-filled, stands on the board!
Fast, fast they ride, the Earl in front;
Fast, fast they ride, with never a word.

IV.

The horse must be good that beareth two,
And holdeth his own in that fierce race,
That is not for life, but more than life—
For love! Oh! that love should be disgrace!

"Push on! push on! I hear a sound,
As though pursuers were on our track."
"Tis nought, dear love; our courser's tramp,
By the distant echo, comes wafted back."

"Push on; push on! I see dark forms,
That cluster thick in the vale below!"
"Tis only some herd returning home;
They have not missed us yet, I trow."

"Hark! 'tis no echo that now I hear!
Push on! they come with gathering speed."
Sir Guy spake never a word, but bent
And thrust his sharp spurs in his steed.

On! on! the night is dark and grim,
The drifting clouds are o'er the moon;
If darkness lasts, they yet may chance
To reach some friendly covert soon.

On! on! brave steed, the pace is hard;
On! on! for love's sake, faint not now!
They see upon the hill behind
The foe come clustering o'er the brow.

The envious moon breaks from a cloud,
A wild shout rises suddenly—
A shout that sounds as full of doom
As doth the boding raven's cry.

V.

In Marlow Abbey the Abbess sits,
She weeps not now, as once she wept,
But vacant gaze and hollow cheek
Tell of some sorrow secret kept.

Humble is she—such not her wont;
Humility is bred of shame;
No longer Lady Abbess she,
As once she was, save in the name.

In Bisham's cloisters walks a monk,
Rigid, austere, and grave is he;
Never a smile lights up his face,
His hours are spent in sanctity.

Deep are the lines upon his face,
Deep are the lines upon his brow;
None know what was his former state—
They call him Father Francis now.

CAUGHT BY A THREAD.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

CHAPTER IX.

SOME weeks after the events mentioned in the last chapter, Lord Bideford was slowly pacing up and down the drawing-room of his house in Brook Street. His hands were nervously clasped behind him, and his worn face showed traces of recent illness. At every second turn which he made, he paused for a moment at the windows, and looked anxiously into the court-yard below, as though hoping to catch a glimpse of the person whose arrival he awaited. After nearly half an hour spent thus, and in watching the heavy rain beating upon the stone figures over the gateway, he had the satisfaction of seeing a cab enter. A few seconds after, Mr. Poole was ushered into the room. The earl silently held out his hand to him, and looked inquiringly into his face.

"I have just had an interview with the solicitors engaged on the other side," said Mr. Poole. "Our conversation occupied a much longer time than I anticipated, so that it was impossible to get here at the hour I mentioned."

"The delay is—hum!—not of much consequence, provided that you have accomplished the object in view," replied Lord Bideford, without that obvious condescension in his tone which he formerly assumed when addressing the attorney.

"You know that at the outset I entertained no hope that they would accept your terms, unless there were some weak point in their case which I had quite failed to discover, so——"

"There is no doubt in my mind that their whole case is weak if the truth were known," interrupted the earl, querulously.

Mr. Poole slightly shrugged his shoulders as he asked, "But how is the truth to be discovered, even if that were so?" Receiving no immediate answer, he went on to say, "I have myself visited Doddington church, and carefully examined the book containing the entry of the marriage. My attention has frequently been called to the great carelessness with which books of that kind were kept during the last generation, and even of late years in the case of a private baptism which took place in London, I found that the entry had not been made till nearly two years after the ceremony had actually taken place."

"Through whose neglect was that?"

"Oh, I was told that the curate was in the

habit of making memoranda of such baptisms in a pocket book, and allowing a year or two to elapse ere he made the entries in the church books. Fully sensible of the magnitude of the stake at issue in your case, I have thought long and anxiously over the possibility of there having been any fraud practised in respect to this particular entry. Where even the year in which a marriage takes place is a matter of uncertainty, supposing that anyone interested in obtaining evidence of it were to obtain access to any old register, it is not very improbable that he might find space left at the bottom of a leaf sufficient to enable him to enter a fictitious marriage; but such a proceeding, in order to evade detection, would require considerable skill in imitating the handwriting of others."

"If that were a very difficult feat one would not so often hear of—yes, of forgeries. I assure you, Mr. Poole, that I once had a butler who forged my signature to a cheque so perfectly that I could see no difference between it and those I had really written. Depend upon it that the entry of this marriage is the work of a forger," continued the earl, eagerly. "It has escaped my memory that I promised Lady Beatrice she should be present when you called."

He was about to ring the bell when his daughter, who had been duly informed by her maid of Mr. Poole's arrival, entered the room. The earl repeated to her what he had just said.

"What is Mr. Poole's opinion?" she asked, turning towards that gentleman with an anxious look.

"That there appears no reason to doubt the genuineness of the entry; for, referring to what I have just mentioned to Lord Bideford, I found that it was *not* the last upon the page. Even if it had been otherwise there was nothing in the appearance of the writing which afforded any grounds for suspicion. There is one fact, however, which is worthy of mention—I have ascertained that no corresponding entry exists in the diocesan registry."

"But isn't that a most important fact?" she asked. "I suppose the one is a copy of the other made at some subsequent time?"

"That is what it was intended to be; but it's well known that there are so many omissions and mistakes caused by the carelessness of the parish clerks whose duty it was to make these transcriptions for the chief registry, that I attach very little importance to my discovery."

The earl, whose hopes had been raised by

the question put to the lawyer by his daughter, now seated himself, with an ill-suppressed sigh, upon a couch. Lady Beatrice quietly placed herself by his side, and affectionately took his hand. After a pause, during which Mr. Poole took a chair, she suddenly turned towards that gentleman.

"It appears very curious, that, of all the other marriages entered upon the page, the one *we* have so much interest in should be omitted from the diocesan register," she said; "I should very much like to ascertain whether the clerk at that period made many similar omissions in the course of the year."

"I am very much indebted to you for reminding me that it would be of importance if it could be shown that the clerk in question was exceptionally accurate in these matters. For instance, if it were found that in the course of seven years the only omission made was that relating to the marriage of Reginald Pennington, it would certainly induce me to regard the entry with some suspicion. But, if *that* is a forgery, the one which follows it at the bottom of the page must be one also."

"Perhaps it is," said Lady Beatrice, simply.

"I declare the possibility of that being the case never occurred to me until this moment," remarked Mr. Poole, thoughtfully, rubbing his forehead. "However, it appears to me that *two* fictitious entries are still more unlikely to have been made than one. It will be worth the trouble to ascertain whether both of them have been omitted in the diocesan register. But even if it is found that such is the case, it would not of itself invalidate the entry of which I speak."

"Lady Beatrice expressed a desire to know how many marriages have been omitted in course of—hum!—transcription by this clerk," said the earl. "Is there any means of ascertaining?"

"It will involve a good deal of work, but I don't think there will be any difficulty in the matter."

"Then I beg that you will do so."

"Very well, my lord, the necessary steps shall be taken without delay."

"You have not yet told me the result of your interview with—hum!—those people."

"With Sir Charles Pennington's solicitors? Well, I saw them this morning, and represented to them the annoyance which a claim of this kind, however impossible to prove, occasioned you. On that ground, and without prejudice, I mentioned the offer that you had instructed me to make—an annuity of five thousand a year to Sir Charles Pennington

in consideration of no further proceedings being taken in the case."

"And what was their reply?"

"Exactly what I anticipated. They told me that they should strongly advise their client not to make any such arrangement, and seemed very much inclined to ridicule my proposal."

"Do you suppose that if the amount I offered were doubled there would be a probability of its being accepted?" asked the earl, in a faint voice.

"I really do *not*, and unless you are prepared to take the advice which I offered to you some time ago it is better to let matters take their course."

"I wonder how it was that they discovered that the marriage took place at Doddington," said Lady Beatrice.

"I understand that it was by means of sending a person from church to church in order to examine the various books," replied Mr. Poole. "Oddly enough in some districts no diocesan register was kept in those days, so that the labour of getting a certificate, when even the county in which the marriage took place is unknown must have been immense. When last the question affecting the Bideford peerage was raised, the union of Reginald Pennington and Elizabeth Pontifex was supposed to have taken place in Herefordshire, if my memory is not at fault."

"I recollect very little about it," said the earl, irritably. "It has always been my firm belief that it never took place at all."

"I wish we were in a position to prove so," said Mr. Poole, smiling. "The only way in which that could be done would be by obtaining evidence that he or she was already married at the time the ceremony took place at Doddington Church, in which case the latter would, of course, be no marriage in law."

"If that is our only chance," said Lady Beatrice, "I am afraid, papa, you must prepare for the worst."

"Isn't it quite possible that the person who pretended to make this discovery was the very man who made the fraudulent entry?" asked the earl, clinging pertinaciously to the idea that the marriage had never taken place. "I am decidedly of opinion that my—hum!—suggestion is of considerable value."

"The necessary inquiries shall be made as to whether he had any opportunity of that kind."

"I hope you will make them yourself."

"There is no necessity for that. An intelligent clerk will do just as well as I."

"Are you quite sure of that? If not, a gentleman on whose judgment I have great

reliance, would, I feel sure, oblige me by going to Doddington for that purpose."

"You mean Mr. Towers, papa?" said Lady Beatrice.

"I do, my dear. If Mr. Poole has no objection, I will mention the subject to Mr. Towers. In all probability he is in the library at this moment."

"Oh, I see no objection to your naming the subject to him," said Mr. Poole, a little stiffly. "At the same time, allow me to say that I prefer selecting a person in my employment for the purpose in question. Meantime, I beg of you seriously to consider the propriety of effecting a compromise by the means to which I formerly alluded. Hitherto I have abstained from informing you that, in the event of Sir Charles Pennington's claim proving successful, you will be called upon to refund a very large sum; it is therefore the more important that you should seek to make terms while there is yet time."

Finding that the earl, instead of replying, remained with his eyes despondently fixed upon the carpet, Mr. Poole rose and took his leave.

"You must not distress yourself, for you are far from strong," said Lady Beatrice, kneeling at the earl's feet, and looking anxiously into his face. "I have a presentiment that this affair will not result so disastrously for us as Mr. Poole imagines."

"I hope you may prove to be right, my darling!" he said, as he leaned forward, and kissed her forehead with trembling lips. "You must continue to take every precaution to prevent your mother hearing of this matter. In her present state it might have a serious effect. It would be terrible indeed, if, besides rank and fortune, I lost—her."

Vain and stupid as he was ordinarily, there was something inexpressibly touching in the tones of his voice as he said this.

"Have no anxiety on that subject—I'll be very careful," she replied.

"I have a strong desire to know if that entry was discovered by—hum!—Pennington himself," he said, after a minute's silence.

"Well, Mr. Poole has promised to ascertain for you; but you may be sure it was found by some one specially employed for the purpose."

"Attorneys are very dilatory, so I suppose a week will elapse before I get to know. It would be a shorter and more satisfactory course if I could prevail upon Mr. Towers to assist me in the matter."

"I fear that Mr. Poole will not like your interfering in his professional duties."

"My dear child, I don't think it could be—yes, construed into anything of the kind. Besides, even if it were otherwise, my anxiety is quite a sufficient excuse. I wonder if Mr. Towers is in the house."

He rose and laid his hand upon the bell-pull. But even then he hesitated as to the propriety of the course he was about to adopt. Perhaps, after all, it would be better, he thought, to write to his solicitors, urging them to use all possible despatch.

Had he failed to carry out his original intention, the whole course of events might have been changed. Lady Beatrice, who had walked to the window, saw Fenwick crossing the court-yard and coming to the house. How often do the merest trifles shape our destinies! The earl was in the act of relaxing his hold upon the bell-pull when he heard his daughter say, "Mr. Towers has just come in."

This decided him, and he rang the bell.

"Morris," he said, to a very tall man with a very solemn expression of face, who made his appearance, "give my compliments to Mr. Towers, and ask him to do me the—hum!—favour to come to me."

"Beg pardon, my lord; Mr. Towers is out."

"I have just seen him returning across the court-yard," said Lady Beatrice.

The man silently withdrew, and in a few minutes Fenwick Towers entered the room. He was no stranger to Lady Beatrice, for somehow her visits to the library had become very frequent of late, and on these occasions, if the truth must be told, she showed a decided partiality for his society. If he recommended a book for her perusal, she was sure to ask him for an outline of its contents, and so by degrees they came to indulge in rather long conversations—much longer than the earl, had he been aware of this proceeding, would have approved of. But Fenwick was innocent of the slightest intention to be more than polite to her.

"I am sure you must have got very wet, Mr. Towers, when you were out just now," she said.

"No; I managed to keep off the rain very well with an umbrella. I had to go to the British Museum to refer to a certain book, and found it impossible to meet with a disengaged cab to bring me back."

"You should have taken one of the carriages; and in future I hope you will do so, whenever it suits your convenience," said the earl. "I suppose you are making good progress with the work. For the last few weeks I have been quite unable to give any attention

to it. The fact is, I have had a great deal of—hum!—annoyance of late.”

“I regret to hear it,” said Fenwick, who had no difficulty in guessing the cause.

“You will, no doubt, sympathize with me, when I tell you that a claim is about to be set up to my earldom.”

“I have already heard that a proceeding of that kind is contemplated,” said Fenwick, looking uneasily from the earl to his daughter.

“Indeed! I was aware that the matter had become generally known. Last week there was a paragraph which referred to it in the *Morning Post*; but no names were mentioned. It has always puzzled me to find out how these—hum!—newspaper people get their information. However, I may briefly state that this claim is based upon the pretended discovery of the entry of a certain marriage in the books of a church down in Devonshire.”

“Pretended discovery!”

“Papa thinks that the entry has been fraudulently made by some interested person,” explained Lady Beatrice.

“I am convinced of it,” said the earl.

“But what reason is there for supposing so?” asked Fenwick, in undisguised surprise.

“One is that a search has been made in the diocesan register, and no corresponding entry can be found there.”

“But you know, papa, that Mr. Poole, to some extent, accounted for that,” said Lady Beatrice.

“I don’t believe that his theory is worth a fig,” replied the earl, impatiently. “Now I wish to ask whether you will oblige me, Mr. Towers, by setting out for Doddington this afternoon, and making inquiries for me?”

“What is it you wish to ascertain?” inquired Fenwick, beginning to feel some embarrassment.

“I am anxious to ascertain the name of the person who discovered the entry, because my decided impression is that it was he who, finding sufficient space on one of the leaves, made the entry.”

“You are making a most unjustifiable charge, Lord Bideford,” said Fenwick, with a sudden warmth which greatly surprised both his hearers.

“Really, I don’t understand your—hum!—grounds for coming to that conclusion.”

“When I tell your lordship that it was I who discovered the entry in question my meaning will be perfectly clear.”

“You!” exclaimed the earl, looking at the young man in blank astonishment.

“Oh, Mr. Towers, you must surely be labouring under some strange misconception,” said Lady Beatrice, looking somewhat distressed.

“By no means. A few weeks before Lord Bideford replied to my advertisement, I was introduced to Mr. Bentley Wyvern, the manager of an insurance company, and at his request I undertook to go to Devonshire and visit a number of churches in order to search the registers for the entry of a marriage believed to have taken place many years ago. I was in complete ignorance that this proceeding had any reference to Lord Bideford, but even had the contrary been the case there was no reason at that time for refusing to give my services in the matter. I very much regret, however, that I should have been the means of bringing about a discovery which so seriously affects the interest of his lordship.”

“Then it is you whom I have to thank for causing me all this—yes—trouble and anxiety,” said the earl coldly.

“No. After all I was only the instrument used. My instructions were to examine the register of every church within twenty miles of Exeter; it can’t be doubted, therefore, that if I had declined to undertake the search, someone else would have undertaken it, and with just the same result.”

“You are acquainted with this Mr. Wyvern?” said the earl, after a pause.

“I am no longer so. He is a person towards whom I feel an unconquerable dislike.”

“What interest had he in proving this marriage?” asked Lady Beatrice.

“He is a friend of Sir Charles Pennington, to whom I have heard he has advanced a large sum of money.”

“Mr. Towers,” said the earl, suddenly, “are you willing to see my solicitors, and give them all the information you can about your proceedings at Doddington?”

“With pleasure; but I fear that I have nothing whatever of importance to communicate.”

“Ah! I don’t know,” said the earl, shaking his head, gravely. “You may be able to tell them of some circumstance which it is desirable that they should know.”

He rang the bell, and ordered the carriage to be got ready.

“I hope you are not going out, papa?” said Lady Beatrice.

“No, no; the weather is too inclement for an invalid, and I am very little better than that at present. Mr. Towers has expressed his readiness to see Mr. Poole, and I am

anxious that the interview should take place without any delay.

"My opinion is," he continued, singularly enough blundering towards the truth, "that Mr. Wyvern employed some one to forge the entry. I don't allude to you Mr. Towers, but to some unknown person."

"Of course, papa, you withdraw your imputation of all fraud as far as Mr. Towers is concerned, and apologise to him for what you were rash enough to say."

"Oh, quite so—quite so," said the earl, nervously fumbling about the cuff of his coat. "And I hope he may yet be of service to me in thwarting those who are endeavouring to—hum!—rob me of my title and estates."

After some further conversation, the carriage was announced to be in readiness, and Fenwick was conveyed in it to the offices of Messrs. Poole and Poole, in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Arrived there, he inquired, in accordance with Lord Bideford's direction, for Mr. Eldon Poole, and learnt from a bleary-eyed clerk, much addicted to snuff taking, that the lawyer had gone to one of the courts at Westminster, and was not expected to return that day.

"If it's anything varry parteeular ye wish to see him about, ye'll joost find him in the Exchequer o'Pleas," said the clerk, with an accent unmistakeably indicative of his having spent his earliest years on the other side of the Tweed.

"But I don't think I should be able to recognise him; and, besides that, it's not a very convenient place in which to have a private conversation. It will be better to call again in the morning."

"Ye'll have to be airy then, for he's away to the country by the half-past ten train. If yer no' able to get here a guid hour before that time ye'll no' obtain an interview. Perhaps his brither wad suit yer purpose as weel?"

"Possibly so; will you give him my card, and say I have called at the request of Lord Bideford."

The clerk, after putting on his spectacles and looking at it, handed it to a young man, with fiery red hair, who was seated before a large skin of parchment. He of the red hair applied his mouth to the end of a gutta percha tube, and immediately after placed his ear there. Fenwick was then requested to walk up-stairs and enter the second room that he came to on the landing. Arrived there, he pushed open a green-baize door, closing with a spring, and found himself in the presence of Mr. Erskine Poole, a very little man, with a very big head and bright penetrating eyes.

He pushed aside a mass of papers which were lying on the table at which he was seated, and turned towards Fenwick, in an attitude of polite attention.

"Lord Bideford wished me to see your brother, in reference to the case in which Sir Charles Pennington is concerned."

"Ah! it is, perhaps, unfortunate that my brother is not here. However, as I am even more intimately acquainted with the case than he, I shall be happy to hear what you have to communicate."

Fenwick then briefly related the particulars of his visit to Devonshire. The lawyer listened to him with marked attention, and then begged him to describe, in the minutest manner, all that took place during the interview with Bentley Wyvern, when Fenwick received instructions as to what part of the county he was to commence his search in.

"The whole proceeding seems to have been very natural," said the attorney, when Fenwick had concluded. "You are quite sure that Mr. Wyvern did not give you the slightest hint which induced you to turn your steps towards Doddington?"

"None whatever. He merely advised me to visit every place within twenty miles of Exeter, and to include the churches in the city itself."

"What distance is Doddington from Exeter?" asked Mr. Poole, folding his hands and looking steadily at Fenwick.

"Sixteen."

"It is a little curious that he should have limited you to the distance within which the parish in question was just situated. There is nothing, however, in all you have told me which affords the slightest grounds for suspicion. May I ask, Mr. Towers, how long you were engaged in this search?"

"Nearly three weeks."

"It appears to me that you got through your work remarkably quickly. I suppose, after finishing with Exeter, you were lucky enough to hit upon Doddington almost immediately?"

"No; I went to a number of places afterwards, and examined, with a single exception, the parish register of each."

"What was the exception to which you allude?" asked Mr. Poole, still keeping his eyes fixed upon Fenwick's face.

"Oh, that was a case where the book containing the entries for certain years was missing. By the by," continued Fenwick, suddenly recollecting the letter which he had received from Chuffneythorpe, "I subsequently had a

letter sent to me from the place in question, stating that the book had been found, and that there was an entry of a marriage in the name of Pennington, but that his wife's maiden name was not Pontifex."

"An entry of the marriage of *Reginald Pennington*?"

"Well, I am not certain that the christian name was mentioned."

"My dear sir, I wish you would ascertain. For aught we know, *Reginald Pennington*, whom we suppose to have died a bachelor, may have committed bigamy. At any rate in so important a case as we are engaged in, it is well worth the trouble of getting a certificate of this marriage."

"I dare say I shall be able to find the letter."

"Then I hope you will lose no time in letting me know if the name mentioned in it is that of *Reginald Pennington*."

Fenwick readily promised this and shortly after took the carriage on to Northumberland Street with that object.

DEATH'S KINSMAN.

THE fifty sonnets, published under the name of "*Delia*," and dedicated to Mary, Countess of Pembroke, by Samuel Daniel, the contemporary of Shakspeare, and poet-laureate to Queen Elizabeth, have just been re-published, "fac-simile from the original edition," edited by Mr. J. Payne Collier. The *Athenæum*, Jan. 15, has a lengthy notice of the reprint, with a short sketch of Samuel Daniel's life, which we may here supplement by saying that his birth-place was near to Taunton, Somersetshire (1562), and that Fuller quaintly says of him, "he carried in his christian and surname two holy prophets, his monitors, so to qualify his raptures, that he abhorred all phrophaneess." He was for three years at Magdalen Hall, Oxford. We refer, however, to the *Athenæum* review of "*Delia*" to specially note the following paragraph:—

"Very frequently we come upon phrases, the honour of inventing which has been assigned to later men; as in this kinsmanship of Sleep and Death:—

Care-charmer, Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,

—of which relationship Daniel himself was probably not the first discoverer."

It is remarkable that the very same phrase is to be found in the play of "*Valentinian*," by

Beaumont and Fletcher, who were contemporaries of Daniel; but, as the exact date of composition cannot be assigned to their play, it is impossible to say whether priority in the use of the phrase is due to them or to Samuel Daniel. This is what Beaumont and Fletcher said of Sleep:—

Care-charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
Brother to Death, sweetly thyself dispose
On this afflicted prince.

This is a curious literary parallel, if it may not be called a plagiarism. Samuel Daniel's most famous contemporary, Shakspeare, has also the same idea, though not expressed in quite the same language. In "*Macbeth*," we have sleep called "the death of each day's life," "death's counterfeit;" and, in "*Hamlet*," we have:—

To die,—to sleep
To sleep! perchance to dream:—ay, there's the rub;
For, in that sleep of death what dreams may come.
So that at least three contemporary poets and dramatists had made use of the idea suggested by the likeness of Sleep to Death.

Since their time, the idea has been frequently repeated. Shelley, in his "*Queen Mab*," adopts the very phrase, implying the close relationship of the two:—

How wonderful is Death,
Death and his brother Sleep!

Butler, in his "*Hudibras*," has the following couplet:—

When Sleep the wearied world reliev'd,
By counterfeiting Death reviv'd.

Dryden, in his "*Don Sebastian*," says, "Death to a man in misery is sleep;" and, in another of his plays, he says:—

For, thou shalt sleep and never wake again,
And, quitting life, shalt quit thy living pain;
But we, thy friends, shall all those sorrows find
Which, in forgetful Death, thou leav'st behind,
No time shall dry our tears nor drive thee from our mind.

The worst that can befall thee, measur'd right,
Is a sound slumber and a long good night.

And again:—

Nay, ev'n in sleep, the body, wrapt in ease,
Supinely lies, as in the peaceful grave,
And, wanting nothing, nothing can it crave.
Were that sound sleep eternal, it were Death.

* * * * *

Where now is Homer who possess'd the throne?
Th' immortal work remains, the mortal author's gone.

And thou,—dost thou disdain to yield thy breath,
Whose very life is little more than Death?
More than one half by lazy Sleep possess'd,
And, when awake, thy soul but nods at best,
Day-dreams and sickly thoughts revolving in thy breast.

Dennis has the following conceit :—

Nature ! alas, why art thou so
Oblig'd unto thy greatest foe ?
Sleep, that is thy best repast,
Yet of Death it bears a taste,
And both are the same things at last.

Cowley comes nearer to the mention of close relationship between Death and Sleep in the following couplet from an ode to the "drowsy god" :—

Let her but grant, and then will I
Thee and thy kinsman Death defy.

Coleridge, in his "Monody on Chatterton," has these lines :—

Oh ! what a wonder seems the fear of Death,
Seeing how gladly we all sink to sleep,
Babes, children, youths and men,
Night following night, for threescore years and ten.

Good Bishop Ken's "Evening Hymn," recurs to the memory :—

Teach me to live that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed ;

and Thomas Warton's elegant Latin epigram, written for the pedestal of a statue of Somnus, placed in the garden of his friend Harris, the philologist :—

Somme levis, quamquam certissima mortis imago,
Consortem cupio te tamen esse tori ;
Alma quies, optata, veni, nam sic sine vitâ
Vivere quam suave est ; sic sine morte mori.

Wolcot's translation of this epigram preserves its beauty in a remarkable degree :—

Come, gentle Sleep ! attend thy vot'ry's prayer,
And, though Death's image, to my couch repair ;
How sweet, though lifeless, yet with life to lie,
And, without dying, oh ! how sweet to die.

And how pathetically did Hood reproduce the idea :—

Our very hopes belied our fears
Our fears our hopes belied ;
We thought her dying while she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

These various passages will interest those of our readers who are fond of noting literary parallels ; and they deal with an idea which at once commends itself to our natural taste, and which has abundant Scriptural authority for its use. From that application of the subject, however, we have here purposely abstained, taking it for granted that the various texts in which Sleep and Death are convertible terms will be familiar to all our readers ; moreover the special simile in the sonnet of Samuel Daniel—to which we have adduced some parallels—is the kinsmanship of Sleep and Death.

TABLE TALK.

THAT procreative "family of colour," the anilines, has begotten us another beautiful member, whose complexion shines with a golden hue. We shall soon derive all the tints of the chromatic scale from the coal tar extract. The new offspring has been christened *Vesuvine* by its discoverer, M. Knosp. It promises to give to silken, cotton, and woollen fabrics all shades of yellow, from bright orange to bright brown. We are not told how it was brought to light ; whether by intention or accident, like some other members of its family. That splendid green that dressmakers and their patrons know as "gas green" was stumbled upon by a lucky fluke. A certain dyer, Chirpin by name, was trying to turn to practical account a blue aniline compound that baffled all attempts to render it fast. It was a fine colour, but there was no fixing it. Chirpin tried all he could think of, without success. One day he told his troubles to a friend, who was a photographer ; and this worthy, without any knowledge of dyeing or chemistry, suggested that, as he, to "fix" his pictures, used hyposulphite of soda, this same salt might fix the blue dye. The suggestion was made from blind faith in the power of his fixer to make everything lasting. Well, without a hope of success, Chirpin made a trial of it. Imagine his astonishment at seeing his fleeting blue change under the soda salt's influence to a gorgeous green. And the best of it was that the new colour was a fast one, at least as fast as any of the aniline family, for they are not a very stable lot. So, ye ladies who shine in aldehyd—that is the night green's technical name—give your thanks to the unwise but faithful photographer.

A CORRESPONDENT : In a recent number it is, I believe, stated that popular quotation is inveterate in its habit of doing rank injustice to both Pope and the Bible—a grave charge indeed. Your correspondent instances a vulgar citation as :—

Welcome the coming, speed the *parting* guest ;
and substitutes (with certain remarks) "*going*," for "*parting*." The full couplet to which he alludes is :—

For I, who hold sage Homer's rule the best,
Welcome the coming, speed the *going* guest.
Imtms. of Horace, bk. ii., s. 2., 159-60.

Now what is sage Homer's rule ? As Pope has translated him, it may be well to see.

Turning over to the *Odyssey*, bk. xv., 83-4, we find:—

True friendship's laws are by this rule expressed,
Welcome the coming, speed the *parting* guest.

So that popular quotation is right here, whatever error it may commit in referring to the exact *place* of the lines. The same may be said of the phrase, "He that runs may read." This is not from the Bible, as your correspondent seems to think, mistaking for its origin the lines in the First Lesson for the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity, in the Book of Common Prayer, (or authorised version) "Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it," or in the Douay version, 1609, "Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he that readeth it may run over it," Hab. 22. But Cowper's "*Tirocinium*" (79-80) appears to be the real source:—

Shine by the side of every path we tread
With such a lustre, *he that runs may read*.

Further, in your number of 27th November last the verse commencing,—

Th' adorning thee with so much art,

is stated as Sir J. Suckling's, whereas I think it will be found to be Cowley's. In connection with the subject, I beg to suggest that a really good instance of misquotation is the famous line from Congreve's "*Mourning Bride*," sometimes given,—

Musick hath charms to soothe the savage beast.

I have heard it, *au sérieux*, from those who ought to know better. Permit me to adduce, not a misquotation, but a misapplication of a well-worn word in the line,—

Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all.

The true poetical signification is here wrested by a literal interpretation to the present popular, but, I believe, corrupted meaning. The surest method of determining the author's meaning of a particular word, is by studying the context with reference to the main idea intended to be conveyed, and, in proportion as the context is wide, so will the conclusion be reliable. Now *conscience* is the faculty of judging of our conduct with reference to a standard of right and wrong. Clearly this definition has no relevancy to the vein of thought pervading the whole passage beginning, "To be, or not to be;" that melancholic contrasting of the sufferings endured here which might be so readily ended with a bare bodkin, but for that dread of *something* (observe the vagueness) after death, which puzzles the will, *i.e.*, which baffles the under-

standing, for the will has nothing to do with such a matter, and makes us rather bear the ills we have, than fly to others we *know not of*. Thus *conscience*—that is, in this manner consciousness, the knowledge that "we know what we are, but we know not what we may be"—makes cowards of us all. I fear that this indeed, is the feeling which predominates in our dread of death rather than any terror of the "still small voice;" the internal judge between right and wrong—in fact, the animal human feeling which, I for one, have no doubt, the poet meant to depict. Bacon, his contemporary, says—"Men feare death as children feare to go in the darke." Fifty years later Milton, struck, I presume, by the beauty of the word in this sense, employs it twice in the same manner—once in "*Paradise Lost*," book viii., and again in the sonnet to Cyriac Skinner.

Her virtue, and the *conscience* of her worth,
That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won.

—*Paradise Lost*, bk. viii.

What supports me, dost thou ask?

The *conscience*, friend, to have lost them overplied,
In liberty's defence.—*Sonnets*, xxii.

PROFESSOR HAUGHTON has recently calculated the total daily work performed by the human heart. He starts with the following postulates, which the physiologist will readily grant:—1. That three ounces of blood are driven from each ventricle at each stroke of the heart. 2. That the hydrostatical pressure on the left ventricle and aorta, against which the blood is forced out, amounts to a column of blood 9,923 feet in vertical height. 3. That the muscular force of the left ventricle, in contracting, bears to that of the right ventricle the ratio of 13 to 5. His calculations show that the daily work done by the left ventricle is 89,706 foot-tons, while that done by the right ventricle is 34,502 foot-tons, so that the total daily work of the heart is equivalent to a force lifting more than 124 tons through one foot of vertical height. The following illustrations will enable our readers to appreciate this enormous force more fully:—1. Three old women, sitting beside the fire, alternately spinning and sleeping, do more work by the constant beating of their hearts than can be done in a day by the strongest "navvy." 2. No labour is regarded as more severe than that of the muscles employed during a boat race; and yet their labour is only three-fourths of that exercised day and night during life by each of our hearts. 3. Let us suppose that the heart expends its extreme force in lifting its own

weight vertically. It is found by calculation that it could raise its own weight 19,754 feet, or nearly four miles, in one hour. An active mountain-climber can lift his own body at the rate of 1000 feet per hour, which is only one-twentieth part of the energy of the heart. When a prize was offered some years ago for the locomotive Alp engine that could lift its own weight through the greatest height in one hour, it was gained by the "Bavaria," which lifted itself (Professor Haughton says "herself," but why a locomotive should be a female we don't know) through 2,700 feet in an hour. This result, remarkable as it is, reaches only one-eighth part of the energy of the human heart. Hence, from whatever point of view we regard the human heart, it is entitled to be considered as the most wonderful mechanism with which we are acquainted.

THE question of the gender of a locomotive, mooted in the preceding paragraph, recalls to mind a similar question lately discussed in *Notes and Queries*. A writer, E. H. A., having stated that he has never seen the sun used in the feminine gender, except in the works of Mede, the author of "Clavis Apocalyptica," who died in 1638, Mr. Skeat shows that in our early authors the sun is always feminine, and the moon masculine. In proof of these assertions he quotes Layamon's "Brut," and Langland's "Piers the Plowman," in reference to the sun, and the old English version of St. Matthew, xxiv., 29, which Dr. Bosworth dates at about A.D. 995, for the moon, which, however, became feminine in Wycliffe's version, A.D. 1389.

IF THOSE misguided old gentlemen, the ancient alchemists, instead of trying to turn base metals into gold, had endeavoured to convert worthless earths into precious stones, they might have acquired fame and fortune, and left their more scientific successors to spend their time on nobler objects. For with all that has been said about science aiding art and industry, it cannot be admitted that it is furthering a very good purpose in creating falsities to gratify vanity. A collection of precious stones described as sumptuous was presented to the learned Academy of France, a few weeks back, by their maker M. Gaudin. There were sapphires and emeralds, and topazes and aqua-marines, and all the glittering host, even to diamonds; and all were made of alumina and some silicious substance fused in the blowpipe flame, and coloured with metallic salts, such as those of gold, silver, chromium,

palladium, and copper. Spurious gems have been made before; their base has been *strass*, which is a soft material compared to M. Gaudin's. The new method ought to open a new field of labour and give us jewels to consort with the false gold and silver work that is so exquisitely wrought now-a-days and that adorns so many persons whom one would not suspect of wearing any but real ornaments.

THE LATE SIR GEORGE C. LEWIS would not believe that there could be a modern centenarian, and he, therefore, would have discredited the recently reported case of the man who died in his 104th year. There is, however, another case of a lady who died at Ripple, on the 1st of February, who was almost a centenarian, being 99 years of age; and who was further remarkable, not only for her name (Mrs. Mary Tabberrer), but also for the fact that she had been a *widow* for 70 years—the three-score-years-and-ten span of a lengthened life.

ONE OF THE READIEST REPORTEES, and most apposite quotations from classical lore, is recorded to have been made by a "stout gentleman," who early in the present century was a bencher of the Inner Temple. He and a friend of his youth met together for the first time after the lapse of many years, during which both parties had got well into prosperous middle life and its frequently attendant obesity. "Bless me!" exclaimed the friend, "what a size you have grown! What a corporation! Why you've no thigh at all!" "No thigh?" retorted the witty bencher, measuring his antagonist with his eye, "Γυνῶθι σεαυτὸν!"

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CHAPTER XI.

AN EVENING PARTY.



FEW days before the end of Reginald's second and last half-year at Dominie Strongi'th'arm's academy, and consequently close upon the Christmas season, the Misses Odger's servant-

maid rapped at the Dominie's door early one morning and delivered, with her mistresses' compliments, a number of notes addressed respectively to the different members of the family of Strongi'th'arm, to humble Mr. Tinkler, and to each of the young gentlemen who cultivated literature under the Dominie's care. The occasion of this magnificent dispensation of hospitality was the approaching "breaking up" at the Misses Odger's establishment, which annually took place the day before the Dominie's boys separated for their holidays. This arrangement was come to by the common consent of the parties at the head of both schools, for the preservation of order and the peace of our

Sovereign lady the Queen; Mr. Strongi'th'arm and Miss Odger having well-grounded apprehensions that if their establishments were let loose on the same day into the passage which connected both houses with the adjoining street a most unseemly riot might ensue; and it was agreed that the plan of having the "breaking up" at the two schools on different days was quite a necessary precaution for the maintenance of the principals' reputation for prudent management and good order.

Of course, as in all old-fashioned schools—establishments for young ladies they are called—before terms were even dreamt of, the breaking-up took place, twice in the year, in a natural and respectable way; one vacation beginning in June, and one in December. On the latter of these occasions, it was the custom of the Misses Odger—as it had been the practice of the late much esteemed Mrs. Odger, their mother—to give an entertainment of a simple, but highly intellectual, character, at which the young ladies under their charge had an opportunity of indulging their appetite for dry sandwiches and Port Negus. The Port, indeed, was only the colouring matter, the ingredients from which the compound derived its delicate flavour were the lump sugar and the lemon peel, so that there was nothing in the beverage calculated to make the young ladies' noses red; or at which the most rigid prude could take offence. On these occasions, the pupils' mammas received invitations to be present: to look on, refresh themselves with sundry glasses of sherry, and enjoy the intellectual conversation of the masters of Music and Writing, who were always in attendance. It had been, some few years previously to this anniversary of the party, the happy and original thought of Mr. Peter Odger to send invitations to the Dominie's boys, and this custom, having also become annual, was looked forward to with considerable delight by the boys at the academy; as at other times their opportunities for observing the habits of the Misses Odger's pupils, were very few and very unsatisfactory

to these intelligent youths—being, in fact, confined to peeping at the young ladies through the cracks in the green door, when airing themselves in their yard for a few minutes before dinner, or when disporting themselves with their battledores and shuttlecocks, and other lady-like pastimes, on such of their half-holidays as were not devoted to walking solemnly forth in couples with the governess at their head; or in paying a visit to the Polytechnic, or other places where instruction and amusement are happily blended for the improvement of the youthful mind.

The young gentlemen, with considerable trepidation, wrote their replies to Miss Odger's "kind invitation," the majority of them accepting the same. Mr. Tinkler looked forward to the approaching festivity as an evening of unalloyed happiness and bliss—in the company of Miss Lucy Strongi'th'arm in white muslin. The last days of the half were spent by the boys out of school, in spirited skirmishes with the "bull-dogs," as they called the street boys outside; and in school hours in what the Dominie termed "examinations." On the day of the party the young gentlemen, being in unusually high spirits, on perceiving a few small stones come flying over their heads from the street, returned these volleys with larger pebbles, to the discomfiture of the "bull-dogs" on the other side of the playground wall. Shower succeeded shower, and the war was waged with fury on both sides; the Dominie being out, and Mrs. Strongi'th'arm engaged with her domestic pursuits, interruption was the last thing expected. Reginald Erle, we are ashamed to say, was one of the ringleaders, and lent his assistance to opening the playground door, as Brewster said, "that they might see what they were shying at." A well-directed missile having struck Reginald on the shoulder, Brewster returned an equally effective shot. The "bull-dogs" were perfectly furious, and drove the Dominie's boys down their yard further and further, till they got quite away from their stores of ammunition, which were seized upon by their invaders and used against them with telling force. At last they were driven to take refuge from the enemy in the coal-shed, which was close to the school-room door; and having no small stones, they broke the lumps of coal, and used the cobbles instead of other missiles. Probably aroused by the noise of the pebbles rattling on the stones before her kitchen windows, Mrs. Strongi'th'arm suddenly appeared on the scene. The advent of this virago put the street boys almost instantly to flight; but unluckily for

the Dominie's hopeful pupils, they were quite in the dark as to what was going on, and were rather disagreeably surprised to find themselves suddenly and unexpectedly shut and padlocked in the coal-shed, and a voice, unmistakably Mrs. Strongi'th'arm's, informing them that they would stop there till the Dominie's return, when "such outrageous impudence would be properly rewarded," adding, that "every lump of coal squandered would be charged in their bills, if she had to make out the accounts, and forward them to their parents herself."

However, on the Dominie's return, the imprisoned warriors were released and dismissed with a caution; for, being the end of the half, Mr. Strongi'th'arm was mercifully disposed, and not inclined to visit offenders with severity.

At eight o'clock on this memorable evening, the drawing-room at the Misses Odger's presented a brilliant appearance, being lighted with two lamps and several wax candles, purchased specially for the occasion. Mr. Peter Odger, in his most insinuating manners, and gloves several sizes too large for him, together with his two sisters in gorgeous evening costumes, were doing their best to place the company perfectly at their ease. Several mammas were present, and most of the young ladies had already made their appearance, when the arrival of the evening took place. A considerable tramping on the stairs was followed by the entry of Mrs. Strongi'th'arm, supported by the arm of Mr. Tinkler. The Dominie and his two daughters followed, and the boys trooped in, in the rear. Dancing would have been considered highly improper by such strictly decorous persons as the sisters Odger, so the amusements provided were confined to the pleasures of conversation; a microscope, through which nobody but Mr. Peter Odger, its owner, could discern anything; the scrap-books and drawings of the young ladies; vocal and instrumental music—Mr. Peter Odger performed very agreeably on the violoncello, and took part in duets with the pretty teacher with much ardour—and the contemplation of two love-birds in a gilt cage.

The boys stood in groups, playing with or biting the fingers of their gloves, near the door; while the young ladies sat demure and silent on the cane-seats provided for their use. Their elders speedily fell into conversation upon the various topics of polite discourse. The Misses Odger displayed the artistic accomplishments of their pupils; exhibiting their water-colour drawings, and calling upon

them, one after another, to strum upon the grand piano.

"How exquisitely natural!" exclaimed the mammas, as Miss Jane Odger showed a flower painted by one of the girls. "Oh, dear! admirable! *What* is it intended for? a rose, or a tulip?" "Ah! beautiful indeed!"

"Come, boys," cried the Dominic, "Mr. Odger will explain the principles upon which the compound microscope is constructed, for us." Whereupon the gentleman thus invited proceeded to focus the wing of the common house-fly.

"Latin for fly?" asked Mr. Strongi'th'arm, determined to show mothers who might have sons to send to school, that the dead languages were not neglected at the Marefair Academy.

Mr. Odger's explanation of the mechanism of his apparatus was more successful than his demonstration of its powers, for only one boy confessed to seeing any thing more than the light in the reflector at the bottom, and he was not sure what it was until Mr. Odger told him it was a scale on the wing of a fly. The Dominic, who had assisted at many previous demonstrations of the remarkable powers of this compound microscope, did not occupy time by looking at the objects himself, but contented himself with repeatedly cautioning the boys not to breath upon the glass and so dull the lenses and spoil the effect. "For," asked Mr. Strongi'th'arm, parading the natural sciences before the assembled matrons, "can we see through an opaque substance?"

To which interrogation, several thoughtless boys at once answered "Yes."

Mr. Tinkler had retired into a corner of the room, whence he could unobserved, contemplate the many charms of Miss Lucy, as she took her place at the instrument, or sat by the side of her mother on an ottoman in the window. A duet for piano and violoncello, executed with surprising skill and ease by Mr. Peter Odger and Miss Lucy, was very warmly applauded. Songs from several of the young ladies followed, and altogether matters were progressing very favourably as the evening wore on. The ice between the Misses Odger's pupils and the Dominic's boys was broken by their inspecting the wing of the fly, and other equally curious objects through the microscope together. The example of making friends being set by a young lady in a white dress with cherry coloured spots, and a profusion of cherry coloured ribands in knots and bows about it.

"How do you do this even ing, Mr. Strongi'th'arm?" said this young lady, who was about

seventeen years of age, and consequently one of the older pupils.

"Ah! Miss Johnson," said the Dominic, who was standing with Reginald at his side by the microscope, "I hope you are well," and he gave her a smile of friendly recognition.

"Come, Mr. Erle," he added, speaking to Reginald, who, likely enough, had never been addressed as Mister in his life before, "I will introduce you to Miss Johnson, who is a *protégé* of mine, and a young lady of—extra-ordinary parts. In her society you may learn something." Having made this remark, the Dominic moved off, and left Reginald and this clever young Miss together. If our hero felt slightly embarrassed at his situation, Miss Johnson's confidence might easily have reassured him. His new acquaintance was extremely plain in feature, and rather high-shouldered; but being a young lady of such talent could the better dispense with merely external attractions.

"I am sure," she said, with marvellous glibness of speech, "I do not deserve the remark Mr. Strongi'th'arm made about me. Something I may owe to nature; but, if I am better informed than other girls, I say, with our great philosopher Newton, I owe it to my superior industry."

Reginald opened his eyes very wide, and regarded Miss Johnson with considerable amazement.

"You are much younger than I am," she continued; "take my advice—never waste a single instant of time. Mr. Tinkler," she said, addressing that gentleman, who was standing near her, "I was giving your pupil here a word of good advice."

"How kind of you, Miss Johnson!" replied Mr. Tinkler, gazing abstractedly after the retreating figure of Miss Lucy, who had just risen from the piano.

"You will laugh if I tell you what I was just thinking, Mr. Tinkler."

"Oh, dear no, Miss Johnson," said the usher, "unless it is something very funny."

"I was thinking, Mr. Tinkler, that I could dictate a simple English sentence, which not three people in the room could spell correctly."

"Indeed!" exclaimed poor Mr. Tinkler, fearing she was about to dictate it to him.

"Yes, I believe it, Mr. Tinkler: there is such a want of accuracy in most people's knowledge."

"Indeed!" replied the usher, thinking of Miss Lucy all the while.

"Why, how many persons in this room, do

you think, could repeat the names of the kings before the Conquest?"

"I fear I could not, Miss Johnson, my memory is such a very bad one."

"Ah! well I can. But my memory is remarkable. Why, only this morning I just ran over the French kings, from Clovis to Louis Phillippe, merely as an exercise. The mind should never be allowed to stagnate, Mr. Tinkler."

"Good, gracious! Miss Johnson, you astonish me," exclaimed the usher, in simple wonder at the young lady's attainments.

"And arithmetic, and ciphering, and statistical science, I delight in. How many barley-corns, placed in a line, would go round the earth, Mr. Tinkler? and, if so, what cubic space would they fill? You will be inclined to laugh at a girl for paying such attention to figures, but you see I mean to be of the greatest use to my uncle Nathaniel."

"Indeed," was again the only reply Mr. Tinkler made.

"Ah! now I see," continued Miss Johnson. "You are wondering who my uncle Nathaniel is. Well," she added, in her most captivating manner, "you must know, Mr. Tinkler, that the home to which I am now returning for good—having finished my education here—is in the dullest, drollest little town you can possibly imagine. You have perhaps heard of Malton—in Berkshire, you know; and my uncle Nathaniel is agent for Sir Harold Mortimer, who is the kindest old gentleman, and always says 'How are you to-day, Miss Ivica?' in the most agreeable way whenever we happen to meet. That is why I have paid such attention to figures, Mr. Tinkler, having made up my mind to be very serviceable to my uncle, who, between you and me, is not very acute. That is my aunt, Miss Majorca Pring, who has come to London on purpose to fetch me. Let me introduce you to her, Mr. Tinkler. I am sure she would be delighted to see you at Malton, if ever you should visit Berkshire."

The tall and angular lady in a peach and amber turban, with an amber ostrich feather in it, introduced to Mr. Tinkler by Miss Ivica Johnson as "My aunt Miss Majorca Pring," by the striking good sense of her remarks, confirmed the impression made upon the usher by her niece of the remarkable ability of the family. Miss Majorca owed her peculiar Christian name primarily to an Island off the coast of Spain; and in a secondary, but really more important degree, to a fancy her mother—who was a very eccentric and

withal self-willed woman—took in the very earliest days of Miss Majorca's infancy. Having doubtless ransacked her memory for the purpose of discovering a name at once feminine, appropriate and uncommon, she at last settled upon Majorca, and, in defiance of the wishes of her friends, gave that name to her elder daughter at the font. Some time afterwards, possibly from a feeling of pique at the outcry made on a previous occasion, she caused her second child to be christened Minorca; and completed the business in her old age by insisting, with senile infatuation, that her granddaughter should receive the name of Ivica in preference to Georgiana, or any other name that the ingenuity of her two daughters could suggest in its stead.

From his attendance upon Miss Majorca Pring, Mr. Tinkler was summoned by the warning notes of Mrs. Strongi'th'arm's voice.

"Mr. Tinkler!—Mr. Strongi'th'arm! Don't you see the boys are off? Don't you miss them?"

"H—m?" said the Dominie, looking round the room, in which only Reginald, and some three or four more of his pupils remained. "Why, what new impidence is this, pray?"

He turned to Mr. Odger for an explanation.

"Down stairs—the dining room," replied that gentleman, groaning, and pointing in that direction.

"Why—what—their impidence!" said the Dominie; "what is there there? only the aquarium?"

"The supper, of course! there won't be a morsel left, I dare say," exclaimed Mrs. Strongi'th'arm, in great anger. "Go after them directly, do."

Mr. Odger and the Dominie made a rush down the stairs, and to their horror found that Mrs. Strongi'th'arm's surmise was true; though no more mischief had been done than consisted in the abstraction of a few raisins and an orange or two. The Dominie commenced the attack upon one of the offenders caught in *flagrante delicto*, with his hand in a dish of biscuits, with great vigour; but the boy was too quick for him, and managed to elude his grasp for about the space of half a minute.

"You come here, sir!" exclaimed the Dominie, out of breath, but still hot in his pursuit, and regardless of what became of the other boys, some of whom crept under the table, while others ran upstairs away from the scene of action in order to avoid identification.

"I'll—thrash—you—till—you can't crawl—you impident—little idiot," cried the panting schoolmaster, making after the boy who was

dodging and bobbing round the aquarium. "That—way, Odger. Then we've got him."

And Mr. Odger, in an ill-fated moment, took his friend's advice, and went that way. In their too eager haste they overturned the aquarium, without catching the boy.

"Oh, n-a-s-t-y !" said the Dominie, as fearful and trembling he surveyed the animal and vegetable contents of the tank on the carpet before him.

"Oh ! Heavens !" exclaimed Mr. Odger, wiping the perspiration from his brow. "What have we done ? What will *Jemima* say ? They're her fish."

"*Jemima*, *Jemima* !" shrieked Miss Jane up the stairs to her sister.

"What was that awful crash ?" responded her sister from above.

"Oh come," replied Miss Jane, in a faint voice ; "all your gold fish are floundering about in helpless agony on the floor, and the smell is awful ; I'm sure I can't go into the room any more."

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH A LONG TIME IS GOT OVER IN
A VERY SHORT SPACE.

AFTER the catastrophe at the party at the Misses Odger's the evening before, the "breaking-up" at the Dominie's was a very tame affair. What was the smashing of a few inkstands or slates compared with the destruction of Miss *Jemima*'s aquarium ?

In the holidays the Doctor began to think of removing *Reginald*, now in his thirteenth year, to some other and better disciplined school. One evening, when Mr. Strongi'th'arm, having called after dinner, stopped to drink some whiskey-and-water and smoke a pipe, while Dr. Gasc sat sipping his claret and listening to the Dominie's converse, he took occasion to hint his intention in his quiet and polite way.

"What !" said the Dominie, in blank astonishment. "What ! take him away—you don't mean it ? Why, we're just beginning to get on."

"I think, Mr. Strongi'th'arm," said the Doctor, in a hesitating way, "I think perhaps the discipline of your school is hardly strict enough for a boy of *Reginald*'s age."

"Discipline !" exclaimed the Dominie ; "Strict !—why I often tell 'em I'll thrash them till they can't crawl. Now, I should like to know, what a man can do more in the way of discipline, eh ?"

"Moral suasion and gentle force—perhaps

also, a more regular routine," Dr. Gasc suggested, feeling all the while that he was treading on delicate ground.

"Pooh ! stuff !" replied Mr. Strongi'th'arm, "I've tried everything. But," he said, suddenly, "no man in this world ever had such a lot to deal with as I have at this instant. They drive me mad. They do indeed."

"You have been telling me the same sad story for some years, Dominie," said the Doctor.

"Ah ! ah ! I'm deaf, you see—deaf, and they take advantage of me."

"Not very deaf."

"Yes, worse since I saw you ; that's really what I came about now. This one," he continued, tapping his left ear with the extremity of his pipe, "all on one side."

Here he paused for a moment or two, then added—

"No, I shouldn't like to lose that boy. Rather lose any boy in the school."

Dr. Gasc promised to reconsider the matter, and the next time he met the Dominie he told him his intention.

"Well, well," said Mr. Strongi'th'arm ; "You'll send him to a public school, of course, if you take him away from me. Eton now ?"

The Doctor announced his intention of sending him to a private tutor, who "received into his house one or two sons of gentlemen" on very remunerative terms.

"Ah ! I've made him what he is. He's a fine fellow. I'm sorry to lose him. So will Mrs. Strongi'th'arm be when I tell her. She'll hardly believe it ; she won't, really."

The Dominie had lamented the loss of many a pupil in a similar doleful strain.

Although, when at the Academy he had generally told *Reginald* he was "impudence and ignorance com-bined," yet whenever he met him afterwards he used to pat his head—or his shoulder when he grew tall—and say to him, "Ah, Erle, how do. Ah ! you were the best boy I ever had. I was the making of you. They never ought to have taken you away. My compliments to the Doctor." And then he would trudge on his way.

Now, under the Reverend Samuel Walker, M.A., at Hampstead, *Reginald* made very capital progress in his reading, and grew greatly into favour with his tutor, who delighted the Doctor on many occasions by the accounts he gave of the young gentleman's application and industry. And upon all these, and many other opportunities, the Doctor, in a few simple but eloquent words, would impress upon *Reginald*

that nothing worth the having can be got without work. And these lessons he took to heart, and read as hard at his Greek and Latin as any boy with the full tide of health and youth in his veins will do. And so, under the fostering care of the Doctor, and with the affection of Madam and Father Francis he grew up towards manhood. Madam was horrified that he should be allowed to sit in the tutorial family pew at Hampstead, and often said that Father Francis was the fittest person to educate and train him. But to this the Doctor's answer was "he had a trust."

And while Reginald Erle was "grinding" under the care of that sound classic, the Reverend Samuel Walker, in the old-fashioned dwelling at Hampstead, making few acquaintances and, as it were, seeing the least possible fragment, of what is called life; Charles Mortimer was reading a little, and playing and lounging a great deal at Harrow. When they met again, it was on the arena afforded by that little world within the wide, great one, a university town.

HOW WE STARTED OUR CLUB.

SINCE my last communication from St. Crabbe's* (and a pretty sensation it caused here, I promise you) we have risen much in our own and the public's esteem. It happened on this wise. One evening last summer we were sitting in Mrs. Brumfitt's back garden smoking our pipes and imbibing gin-sling. The garden has been allowed to run to decay, else it would be a pretty place enough. There is rock-work against the wall covered with ferns which encloses little ponds in which there are gold fish, and on the summit of the rocks in a perfectly inaccessible position (were it natural) are the miller's house and a water mill, which under its present circumstances could only be turned by a shower of rain, as it is on the extreme top of the rock. Art, however, has come to the rescue, and by an ingenious hydraulic arrangement, a small spout connected with the tap in the larder, protrudes from the wall just above the wheel; so that when the grand waters are to be exhibited, all that has to be done is to turn the tap on, and they play.

There were four of us, and none in the best of humours. An open grating over a drain is hardly a pleasant neighbour on a warm

summer's night, and the gin-sling was pronounced inferior, as there was decidedly more of the sling than gin in the compound. We had several times before suggested to Mrs. Brumfitt the outlay on her part of a few pounds to procure some comfortable chairs and round tables, so that with a little taste displayed in the horticultural department, she might rival those pretty garden cafés so often found in Italy. Complaints had also been frequently made of the inferior state of the commissariat. But as Mrs. Brumfitt has lived all her life in St. Crabbe's, which to her mind is the centre of civilization, and has married a tailor, who of course from his trade must be an excellent judge of liqueurs, it was not likely that the opinion of gents, who, because they belong to London clubs, and have travelled and got their heads crammed with foreign farangoes (whatever they may mean) and a parcel of rubbish, would be considered worth attention. Furthermore, there we were; she had us, as she thought, under her thumb, and a monstrous big one it is too, so she never took any steps to make us more comfortable, but slept the sleep of security, little dreaming of the terrible Nemesis that was shortly to overtake her.

"Horrid stuff this whiskey, tastes of tallow," growled Arthur Sawle, in the fine bass voice he owns.

"Confound it! yes," says De Boots. "When I was in Russia, staying with my brother-in-law, General Popemoff, the butler brought, one day, some kimmel which was not to his taste, and—confound the fellow, what was his name—he was sent off instantly to Siberia." And De Boots stroked his moustache with an air as if he expected us to believe it.

"I can't consieve why the reshidents of Sht. Crabbes'h haven't shtarted a club," said the Rev. Mr. Tent, who was staying at St. Crabbe's for the benefit of his health, which, as far as could be judged from appearances, required a severe course of brandy and water, and Latakia; and who always pronounced his s's as if his tongue was affected by the treatment.

"By Jove! let us see if we can't," said I, "and set about it at once to-morrow."

Another gin-sling a-piece was ordered, while we discussed the probable chances for or against success. We all had more or less experience of clubs, except the divine, who never having belonged to one, maintained he knew more about them than we did. We were perfectly alive to the difficulties to be encountered, and the various interests to be consulted in so small a community as ours. There

* See ONCE A WEEK, Nos. 81, 82, pp. 13—35, "My Watering Place."

is always an individual who is certain to be left out in the cold. Perhaps it is the oldest inhabitant who has not been consulted, and considers it due to his rank and station that he should be pitchforked into a society of gentlemen *volentes volentes*. He forgets that, possibly, the better a man is known, the less he is liked, and that if a certain number of gentlemen agree to combine together for social purposes, they have at least the right to select their associates. Then there is the local bore who has been wisely ignored, and who dribbles out his wrongs with garrulous senility at the Areopagic tea tables of the old maids, of whom he makes the delight; or there are the envious people who have been trying to do the same thing all their lives and never succeeded, and complain because younger men with more brains and energy have. All these obstacles to unanimity and good fellowship have to be carefully considered.

However, the next day we had our meeting, when it was agreed that if we could get twenty-five members to begin with, the matter should go on. We did, and it was resolved that those twenty-five should be original members, and that all future candidates were to be balloted for. And, curious enough, from this apparently harmless and reasonable decision, our first troubles began, as will be seen presently.

Mr. Spurr, the spirited proprietor of the Assembly Rooms, mentioned in a former paper, fell in with our views, and agreed to give us a couple of rooms, one a reading, the other a smoking room, and the use of the balcony. As the latter was long and wide and overlooked the sea, I foresaw great opportunities for making it a leading feature of the club; and the Café Concordia at Genoa, with its terraces and flowers and seats, rose to my mind. I gave Mr. Spurr an animated description of the celebrated café, and proposed that he should immediately convert the balcony into an humble imitation of it. With some justice he suggested that, if fitted up as I proposed, the expenses would swallow up more than the subscriptions of the twenty-five members, and that it would be better at first to furnish the two rooms, and wait till the club was richer; which, considering it had not a penny as yet, as all the entrance money went into Mr. Spurr's pocket, was not unreasonable. Nevertheless, a few days afterwards we found a neat awning erected, and tables and chairs there, not the least like the Café Concordia, but affording a pleasant retreat from the heat, and an agreeable locality for taking the cooling drinks to quench the thirst the heat promoted.

The evening of the inauguration of the balcony it was very prettily lit up with Chinese lanterns, and most of the members assembled to congratulate each other on the prosperous turn matters had taken. As the people on the pier and promenade could see the unwonted spectacle of lanterns, and hear the sound of festive voices, and perhaps the harmonious jingle of the ice against the glasses, it speedily burst upon their astonished minds that the club was alive and drinking; and the next day every wife of every member received an anonymous letter warning her that such an institution was foreign to the tastes of St. Crabbe's, and could only lead to her husband's gambling, drinking, and ultimate ruin.

There is no doubt that Lady Pump was our great antagonist, and was watching her opportunity to do us an injury. She had not long to wait. That peripatetic old warrior, Major Belcher, was away when we got our twenty-five members, but turned up three days afterwards when everybody thought he was at Vichy. We had made the rule very stringent, which required every candidate, after the twenty-five, to be balloted for, as there were of course plenty of funkies and shirkers, who would not share the heat and toil of the day, but would wait and see what came of it. Now the Major, as he wasn't in the town at the time, could not be asked to join, and it was impossible for anyone in his absence to take upon himself to affirm that he would. So one day he met one of the committee.

"Ra-ra-ra-ra—um—ha—glad to hear—ra—you've got up a club—ra—very gentlemanly thing—hum ha!—put me down as a member—very gentlemanly—ra-ra-ra-ra."

"Can't put you down as a member," says Locke, "but happy to put you down as a candidate."

"Um—ha—ra-ra-ra-ra—hanged if I do—oldest inhabitant of St. Crabbe's—good balance at my bankers—won't be balloted for—very ungentlemanly, ra-ra-ra-ra—got up by a parcel of fellows who live in lodgings—don't know anything about them—very ungentlemanly—very—ra-ra-ra—" And he gave one of the columns a vicious *coup de Jarnac*, which took off at least a pound of stucco.

"Well, but," says the conciliatory Locke, "we have made our rules, and we can't alter them for you. Besides you are certain to get in."

"No, sir. No, sir." (I believe he was right.) "D—d ungentlemanly, ra-ra-ra-ra. Twenty years ago I'd have horsewhipped all the committee first, and shot them afterwards."

And he went off puffing and snorting and raring like a sea monster.

"Here's a row!" said Locke, when he reported the above conversation to the committee. "The old man is in an awful state."

"I move," said Mr. Strete, M.P., our chairman, "that the words of the honourable—no—military gentleman be taken down, and that a select——"

"Shut up," growls Arthur Sawle, "who the deuce cares what the old fool says."

"What do you think, Mr. Secretary?" says Mr. Archer. "I object in the first place——"

I say (I am the secretary), "Well, if he objects to being balloted for——"

He e'ther fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who dares not put it to the test,
And risk the mild black ball."

Col. Ankeride, in his sarcastic way, considers that the club is likely to flourish in spite of the possible enmity of malcontents, whose pretentious obscurity is their only merit.

So, notwithstanding the intercession of his friend Locke, it was decided that the major, if he wished to become a member, must submit to the ballot.

In a few days the rooms were finished under the auspices of Mr. Spurr, and very comfortable they were. Mr. Spurr is a gentleman of various resources and attainments. He is wine-merchant, proprietor of the rooms, and secretary to the life-boat. Sometimes in the latter capacity, when there is a wreck a few miles off, he puts on a cork-jacket, and drives over in a fly to a convenient spot on the cliffs, whence he directs operations, and encourages the crew by his presence and example. We wanted him to be house-steward, and manage everything himself, but his rank would not submit to that; he agreed, however, to provide suitable attendance, and the waiter he engaged was a very remarkable young man, whom I shall presently describe.

On the evening of the day, then, when it was announced that the club was ready for the reception of members, there was a general meeting to pass the rules, which had been compiled with great care by the committee, and they were passed accordingly. They had not been in force a week before it was discovered they were inadequate to the requirements of so august a body, and had subsequently to be entirely revised. But this is by way of parenthesis. When business was over a big drink was provided by the hospitality of our M.P.; but I am unable to give any trust-

worthy account of the various events of the evening, as many serious discrepancies occur in the statements of different members. Suffice it to say, that the guests separated at a late hour, and did not meet until an equally late hour the following day. One or two members did not meet at all. Thus the St. Crabbe's Club leapt from the womb of doubt into an existence of certainty.

At the first ballot which took place two candidates were black-balled—one a gallant captain, the other a divine; and both, I think, deserved it.

Pause, Muse! and here recount what dire consequences here befell. What storms of indignation rose, what cries of vengeance, from all sides. Who ever heard of any one in St. Crabbe's being black-balled? True, no one had ever had the chance, but what of that? "Hoity, toity!" said Lady Pump, who had been the leader of fashion at St. Crabbe's for years, and now saw the sceptre gliding from her grasp, "who are these young *parvenus*" (Sir Marmaduke had been an army surgeon) "who come down here and pretend their betters are not good enough company for them?" It was alarming the quarts of tea the old lady consumed in fighting the battle of Belcher and the rejected ones. As for Belcher, he foamed at the mouth with rage as he rightly guessed he had no chance now. And the first time he met two of the committee he acknowledged their salute by cutting them dead. He met me the next day, but, as I had been told of the occurrence, I took the initiative and cut him. I leave you to guess what his face was like. He cut them all except Locke, who gave snug little dinners to which he had the *entrée*.

Not the least heavy of the cudgels with which the club was belaboured was wielded by Mrs. Brumfitt. As Serjeant Buzfuz said of Mrs. Bardell, it was no figure of speech to say, her occupation was gone. The bar, indeed, stood open, but it was unfrequented, save by an occasional bagman. Those choice liquors stood ranged in a row on the counter, but no one drank them. The injured one banged her big hand down on the table, and vowed vengeance. Did she take it? I don't know. But we had a visit from a very polite exciseman, who with perfect courtesy demanded an explanation, which was immediately granted, of the manner in which the club obtained its wines and spirits. He did his bidding gently, and was satisfied; and there was a merry twinkle in his eye, as he said:—

"There's a lady in this town, gents, as is

not friendly to this 'ere club; she says her husband is kept up till two o'clock in the morning, gambling and drinking; and she has thought it worth her while to write and tell me so, only she doesn't sign her name, and it's no business of mine."

Nevertheless, in spite of its enemies, the club flourished apace. New names came pouring in, and we actually had the audacity to pass a rule that all future members should pay a guinea entrance fee, not to go into Mr. Spurr's pocket, but to form a fund for the benefit of the club; in consequence of which we have now opened an account at the local banker's.

There was one more event to add *éclat* to the club, and increase the rage and despair of the outsiders. Mr. Strete, M.P., invited the twenty-five to a *déjeuner* to commemorate its foundation. He had the good sense to confide the composition of the *ménu* to my hands, on the condition that I would spare no expense. I flatter myself I fully carried out his wishes in both respects. St. Crabbe's contained no cook worthy of the occasion, so I had to make frequent pilgrimages to the neighbouring cathedral-town of St. Thomas; where, if report speaks true, the ecclesiastical dignitaries are not unworthy disciples, as regards the pleasures of the table, of the abbots of old. The artist I consulted (he was *chef de cuisine* to the fattest prebendary) was fully equal to the magnitude of the occasion, and with the acute discrimination of his admirable profession, soon became aware that he had no novice to deal with. Space will not permit me to reproduce the *ménu* here, but the curious in such matters will probably find it in the "Epicure's Handbook for 1869." Mr. Spurr undertook to supply the wines which were, without an exception, excellent. If I mention one in particular it is not that I wish to make any invidious distinctions, but there was a Chateau d'Yquem of '41 which brings tears of gratitude into my eyes as I recall it.

The *déjeuner* was laid in the supper-room of the Assembly Rooms. The dinginess of the walls and fittings was effectually concealed by banks of beautiful flowers, supplied from the celebrated nurseries of St. Crabbe's. At my request, and as a partial reward for my labours (I say partial, for I did not reap its entirety till about two hours after I sat down to table), I was permitted to exhibit the arrangements to a party of ladies, who all agreed that it was a shame the superior sex should alone be admitted to so elegant an entertainment. Without distinctly pledging myself to anything, I made an ingenious but guarded statement,

to the effect that the club had in contemplation a ball, to be given next year. This appeared to satisfy them.

Well—we sat down, and everybody was delighted. After hunger was appeased, Mr. Strete, M.P., rose and proposed my health in flattering terms, not only as secretary to the club, but as the composer of the *ménu*. I responded in elegant language, not unmingled with humour. The following was my peroration:—

"Gentlemen: I venture to prophesy, looking forward through the long vista of years, that a club will be established in this place on such a basis as will make more pretentious institutions wonder. (Hear, hear). I see the balcony gorgeous with a thousand flowers, amidst which the jaded voluptuary, whose Randell-déifying corns have toasted on the broiling pavement of Pall Mall and St. James's Street, during the season, rest those excrescences on the chair of luxury. I see him sipping awhile the drink of coolness, whose ice, clinking merrily against the glass, rings out the joyful knell of a wholesome thirst. (Immense cheering). I see that noble ball-room, formerly devoted to quacks and quadrilles, politics and preaching, turned into a vast *salle-à-manger*, where the glaciers of table-cloths surmounted by the snowy peaks of innumerable napkins invite the *gourmet* to partake of a *chef-d'œuvre* composed by the cunning hand of some high-priest of the kitchen, ravished perchance from his regal or ducal stew-pan by offers from Chevet or Potel (agents of the St. Crabbe's club), too magnificent to be resisted. I see the continent ransacked for the choicest vintages, and Metternich imploring the club to give its *cachet* to a supernacular Johannisberg. I see the wits of Europe attracted by the beauty of the scenery and the excellence of the *cuisine*, flocking to what, no doubt, will be the capital of Brains; and, finally, gentlemen, I see in the present, a pleasant, united and plucky little club. Floreat!!" (Prolonged cheering).

Since that day we have still gone on flourishing, and have got rid of the last incubus that weighed upon us. That was the whistling waiter I have alluded to. This eccentric child of genius laboured under the deplorable delusion that his music soothed the savage breasts of the members, and to add bad to worse, he corrupted the musical morals of the billiard-marker. But though he was abhorred by the club, he was the beloved of nigger melodists. Alas! that the St. Crabbites should be partial to that sable minstrelsy. About twice a month some dusky *troupe* make a descent on our

shores, and the well-disposed inhabitants dread their coming, as much as Robinson Crusoe did the fortnightly visits of the cannibals. That misguided youth "collided" with them. He "interviewed" them after their performances, and gave specimens of his skill. The next day, all over the club did this son of song renew his impressions of the former evening's entertainment; on the piano, on the harmonium (these instruments, the property of our Philharmonic Society, are always in the rooms), on the shrill whistle, with which a cruel Nature has gifted him, were his maddening melodies repeated. In vain was he remonstrated with, or cursed at, he never would be stopped. At last, I did for him. One Sunday, I was obliged to pass the morning at the club, owing to circumstances over which I had no control. At 1.30 p.m., when I left, I wrote the following in the Suggestion Book.

PROGRAMME OF MUSIC,

Executed on Sunday morning, November —, at frequent intervals between the hours of 11 a.m. and 1.30 p.m.

Duet.—Waiter and Marker.—"Just before the Battle."—CHRISTY'S MINSTRELS.

Solo.—Waiter.—Anvil Chorus from "Il Trovatore," with heels of boots accompaniment.—VERDI.

Whistle.—Waiter.—Ditto with Variations.

Harmonium Solo.—Waiter.—Descriptive Piece.—Supposed to represent the weeping and gnashing of teeth of children of sin in Hades. Still going on 1.30 p.m.

When is this intolerable nuisance to be put a stop to? If the cultivation of his musical talents be part of the duties of a club waiter, let him be recommended to the Madrigal Club, or Wandering Minstrels.

That finished him. Sarcasm effected what remonstrances had failed to accomplish. He gave warning next day, and has announced a benefit at the Athenæum, when "The popular baritone, Mr. Tim, will sing several favourite melodies, and go through his surprising performances on the penny whistle." Poor Athenæum! Nevertheless, *I will be there!*

A PARSON'S NOTES ON MATRIMONY.

FEW subjects have been more frequently written on than marriage, its attendant rites, and the curious anecdotes connected therewith. Except to avowed old maids and determined bachelors, these points must always be interesting, inasmuch as all have either undergone, or hope to undergo, ere long, the initiation which makes them free of that El-Dorado of the affections, matrimony. Apart from all

sentimental views, indeed, marriage (and here we lay claim to the eternal gratitude of the fair sex) is, as a matter of the coolest calculation, the best condition of life. Statistics prove that a man has a fair chance of living eleven years longer if he marries, than if he remains a bachelor. In spite of Mill and Malthus and the harsh conclusions of political economy, he will, *me judice*, largely increase his happiness by so doing; but then my tail has long been cut off, and, of course, my recommendations are always to be viewed with caution. Adages speak of "marrying in haste and repenting at leisure," and tell us that "the marriage day is the morrow of good times;" proverbial philosophy, however (except Mr. Tupper's), is notoriously hostile to marriage. Doubtless, envy drives wretched bachelors to give currency to these sayings; benedicts, from the serenity of their position, can well afford to look down upon such malignant utterances. Marriage is the crown of life, and if any fault is to be found with the education now offered by ladies' colleges, it is a fear lest their tendency be to make their pupils philosophers rather than good wives.

To resume, however; the following anecdotes on marriage the writer believes have not before been printed. Most of them have fallen under his own notice. The usual preliminary to, by far the larger proportion of, marriages is having the banns published. The orthography and infamous writing of many of the notes handed to clergymen on this subject are models of ingenuity. Thus we were once requested to publish the banns of "Lewekretia So and So," which it required some reflection to alter into Lucretia. On another occasion, a burly seafaring man repaired to a curate in the East of London, and delivered his name and that of the lady's, to be duly called over. On the clergyman telling him there was no fee for publishing banns, the man seemed quite disappointed at being married gratuitously, finally invited the clergyman to the nearest public; "and," added he, "I will stand you a glass of brandy to drink our healths." The manners of the inhabitants at that end of London are peculiar; the same clergyman informed us that he had known a parson called into a house to pray to a sick man, and while he was on his knees doing so, his pocket was picked! In Scotland, a swain, Tam by name, came late on Saturday night to the minister to beg him next day to call his banns with Janet. A week afterwards he returned to withdraw them, "as he had a *scunner* (*i. e.*, a spite, quarrel), against Janet." Janet herself appeared on the third

Saturday, and had the banns published afresh, only to come back in her turn the following week, to have them once more cancelled, as she now had a *scunner* against Tam! The fifth Saturday brought them both to the minister, who, however, angrily broke out:—"Off wi' ye! ye dinna knaw yer ain minds! Noo, I hae a *scunner* agin ye both, and I will hae naething mair to do wi' yer banns!"

Sailors do not always make sober bridegrooms. A good story is told of one going with his Jenny to church to be married. Even at eight a.m., he was so evidently intoxicated that the clergyman refused to perform the service. Jack accordingly left, arm-in-arm with his intended, in high dudgeon. One of his mates espied him, and sang out:—

"Well, Jack, are you spliced at last?"

"No," hiccupped he, "the parson was too jolly drunk to do the job, so he told us to come agin to-morrow."

As the parson in question was a well-known dignitary of the West of England, it may be imagined with what zest the story was told in the county. Sailors have a custom, too, of kissing their brides in the middle of the marriage service, which is not conducive to reverence.

The papers take care to inform us, after every fashionable wedding, how the bride was dressed. It may not be generally known that the costume was often much simpler in old days than at present. Indeed, there are instances within the memory of man, of brides having come to church to be married, dressed only *en chemisette*, from an idea that they could thus cancel their responsibility for all debts contracted before marriage. Whatever may be thought of the legal question, this, at least, shows to what shifts debt may reduce its victims.

In some parts of the country it is thought extremely unlucky for the bride and groom to enter the church at one door and leave it, when the marriage is over, by another. It is an old clerical joke when the groom enters the vestry before service, for some one to open its outer door and bid him escape, even at the last moment, now he has such a friendly chance offered him. For the most part, eccentricities during the performance of the sacred rite, must be looked for in a lower grade of society. We remember, however, a clergyman as the happy groom, who was so wrapped up in the contemplation of his felicity, or so used to take a different rôle in the service, that he maintained silence when he ought to have spoken the words of espousal to his

partner. This was easily remedied by a considerate nudge from his best man; but wilful misbehaviour or irreverence on the part of one or both of the contracting parties not unseldom meets with a fitting rebuke by the clergyman's withdrawing and refusing to continue the service. Canonical hours, too, leave small time, as things are at present, to repair the mischance on the same day. The Marriage Commission proposes to make it easier for the future, by a liberal extension of time. Awkwardness and ignorance are responsible for many amusing mistakes at the performance of the holy office, which does not always proceed so harmoniously as the Laureate's lines:—

The ring is on,
The "wilt thou" answered, and again
The "wilt thou" asked, till out of twain
Her sweet "I will" has made them one.

One great country lout for whom we officiated, who shook with nervousness and was green rather than pale with fright, at the very beginning of the solemn question which asks if the man be willing to marry the woman, broke out suddenly, much to the trial of our gravity, with a loud "Ah woll!" A fair bride answered the important query with an unhesitating "Yes," which is equally unrubrical if just as prompt. A good story is told of another who, with remembrances of the Catechism strongly present in her mind, much to the amazement of the parson, replied to the same question with the long answer from that instruction, beginning, "Yes, verily, and by," &c. A hulking farmer, who evidently "meant business," and somewhat scorned forms and ceremonies, answered this all-important question with a downright "Ah coomed 'ere for that very purpose." In Devon, rustic bridegrooms invariably pledge themselves "with all my worldly goods I thee and thou," instead of "I thee endow," evidently led astray by that delightful confusion of pronouns so dear to the dialect of the west. When the ceremony had been performed over several couples at once, in the good old times, there is a legend which tells that the clergymen used to say to them, somewhat testily, amidst the slight confusion which generally occurs on such an occasion, "Now, then, sort yourselves!" but the present it is to be hoped, is a more reverent age.

The marriage over, what a world of romance is displayed to the fancy as the register books are opened and the characteristic signatures of so many fair brides are beheld! Here is one firm and regular, boldly, not to say decisively, written. There is no doubt that a spinster of a certain age wrote that. A glance shows us

that her age, thirty-eight say, confirms our conjecture. Look at these letters, trembling and seemingly in want of something to lean on ; yes, that was penned by one

Standing with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet
Womanhood and childhood fleet !

And so on with the rest. It is easy to philosophise over them all, and a professor of graphiology could desire no finer field of practice. The men generally sign with a rough and ready hand, as if they were tired by this time of the whole proceeding. We remember an anecdote, related by an East London curate, concerning these registers, which to the imaginative are the very charters which admit two souls to the paradise of wedlock. A weather-beaten seaman had already called down the parson's reproof during the service by laughing at his bride, and had so touched his heart by the *naïve* manner in which he excused himself for his irreverence, by saying, "Please, sir, she looked at me !" that he consented to go on with the rite. When, however, it came to signing his name, he entered quite a different name to that in which he had been married, and apologised for it by saying, "I am very sorry, but I was thinking of a friend !" As the ceremony was over, the clergyman concluded the best thing to do was to alter the signature, and deem that the man had taken his "mornin'" a trifle too strong.

As for the wedding breakfast and the speeches—what need to recount anecdotes of them for any one who has heard (and who has not?) John Parry's inimitable raillery on them? No more sensible movement is now stirring than the general desire to have these festivities later in the day. As things are, noon finds you with the uncomfortable sensation that you have already made a vast indigestible dinner, and ought to be going to bed. Gretna Green marriages are now as much a thing of the past as Fleet marriages; but the good old custom of throwing shoes after the happy couple will not soon die out, it is to be hoped. We have even seen people in a little village church attack the happy pair, at the conclusion of the service, with hassocks. Has this old observance anything to do with the notion of the stool of repentance which some marriages very soon involve? One more story—and it shall be a word of warning to young husbands starting on the wedding tour. A shrewd Italian courier, who was accompanying his master on such an occasion, observed him tenderly carrying to the carriage a bonnet-box belonging to his fair partner. He

stopped him at once, and said, with *empressment*, "Monsieur will pardon me, but—bonnet-box now, bonnet-box always!"

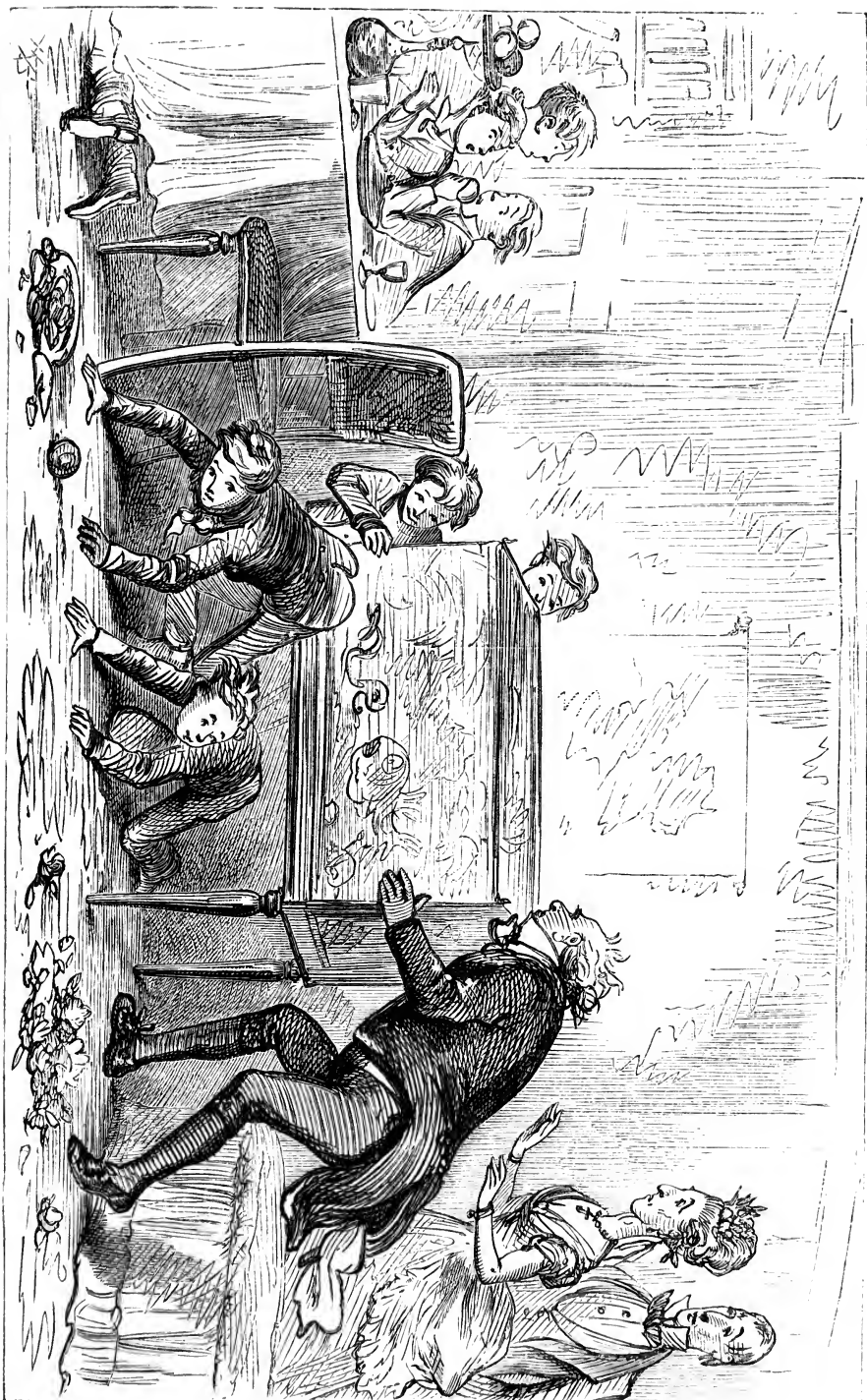
DICK'S APOPTHEGM.

"Avoid the man who hates flowers and the voice of a child."

I WOUND along the face of Dover cliffs
In hot July, and dazzling white the chalk
Ray'd back the heat: above a dizzy height,
Hung fearless wild flowers, and the washing wave
Broke on the beach a dizzy depth below.
Sick with the noonday blaze, I marked a cave,
Scoop'd out to witless semblance of a house,
One room, with crazy door; and entering in
Found Dick, the path-cutter. No sinecure
His office. Year by year the touch of time
Makes havoc: frost-crabb'd winter and the storms
Make mimic avalanches of the chalk,
And spoil his work. Yea, summer scarce re-
frains:

And every wave that lashes on the rock
Rolls back like milk. I found Dick garrulous;
And, being idle, sat an hour and smoked;
And watch'd the sails pass by the open door,
And saw the buoy dip with the battery shot.
A hale and honest fellow, Dick, content
With little, gathering samphire, netting prawns;
With cheery talk for every passer-by,
Tho' sleeping on a mat of straw: his age
Some three-score years; with tough and sinewy
arms,

But softer heart. Two children, on two stools,
Sat near him: guests, who stay'd out half a day,
And found in wifeless Dick a friend. The girl,
Some four years old,—I took her for a boy,—
Half wild, half shy, and graceful as a goat,
As native as the sea-wreck to the place,
Made friends with me, too. Yellow hair she had,
Unloop'd, and brown bare little legs and feet,
And wide blue eyes. I liked to talk with Dick:
A shrewd and travell'd man, and apt at speech.
"He's the grand master,"—pointing to the sea,
Dick said,—"he's master of all masters here,
When winter comes: he's quiet enough now."
Who loves not talk like this, from one whose hands
Sweat with rough toil? I listen'd with delight.
I learn'd some lessons, and acquired some facts:
That samphire is no longer in demand;
That fossils will not sell. He had a stock:
Shut in a flint a sea-urchin, complete—
A beauty! What seas left it on the shore,
A million years ere God wall'd England round
With ever-shifting bulwark of the main?
Then flints were low in price; he hoarded up:
He would not let them go, though hoarding up
Came hard. But one grand lesson, which I knew,—
But here repeat for such as are more used
Than I and Dick to measure with the world,—
The old man's lips made beautiful. He said,
"Avoid the man who loves not the wild flowers,
Nor cares to hear the prattling of a child."
Pondering the lesson as I went I felt
How true it was: yea, somehow, with the sense
Of its deep truth, the sea-gulls dipp'd more glad,
The lipping wave broke tenderer on the shore,
The seaman's oar seem'd human, and Heaven kind.



Once a Week.

"That—way, Odger." (PHIZ.)—Page 115.

[March 12, 1870.

CAUGHT BY A THREAD.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

CHAPTER X.

AS Fenwick entertained no doubt that the letter he was about to seek would turn out to have no reference to the disputed marriage, he did not pause to consider the possible consequences of the contrary proving the case. But, even had it been otherwise, he would not have felt himself justified in withholding any information likely to be of service in elucidating the truth. The noise of the carriage drawing up at the door brought Mr. Hurlston to the window. Fenwick looked up as he descended, and saw the old man beckon to him. With difficulty getting past a couple of large overland trunks, which were lying in the narrow lobby, Fenwick went up to the drawing-room.

"I hope you feel better to-day?" he said, pressing Mr. Hurlston's hand kindly.

"No, I don't; and it's not very likely that I shall till I get away from England," replied the old man, gruffly. "Thank goodness there is no longer anything to delay my departure. The first instalment was paid to me this morning, so I shall lose no time in securing a passage in the next good ship which sails for Port Adelaide."

"Then I shall soon have one friend less on this side of the world."

"Pooh! I have given no great proof of my friendship as yet."

"I have not forgotten your kindness in seeking an interview with Mary, in order to discover the real cause of her silence."

"Ah! but I had another motive besides that, which I have not yet explained to you."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; I was desirous of seeing the woman whom you had selected to be your wife. You will probably attribute that to mere curiosity. But it was not so. I told you, at the commencement of our acquaintance, that I detested inquisitive people; you may be tolerably sure, therefore, that I am not one of that class myself. No; I wished to be able in after years, when I am far away, to recall the face of her whose happiness, as well as your own, I shall have done something towards securing. Do you remember that I congratulated you some weeks ago?"

"Yes; but, to be candid with you, I don't in the least understand why," replied Fenwick.

"You promised, however, to enlighten me on that point before you left here."

The old man went to a drawer in the table, unlocked it, and handed a folded paper to Fenwick.

"Am I to read this?"

"If you wish to ascertain why I congratulated you," answered Mr. Hurlston, seating himself on the tiger-skin and beginning to fill his hookah.

Fenwick opened the paper and saw that it was the old man's will, by which he had left the whole of his property to him, with the exception of an annuity of fifty pounds a-year to be paid to "Richard Fuller, otherwise called Ralph Fletcher," upon condition of this person leaving England within a month, and continuing to reside in one of the British colonies. From the time when Fenwick had been shown the draft of an agreement for the purchase of part of the land at Port Adelaide, he had ceased to doubt the statements made by Mr. Hurlston as to his being possessed of property there.

"I hardly know how to express my thanks for so unexpected——"

"Don't attempt anything of the kind, otherwise I shall add a codicil, leaving all I possess to public charities," interrupted Mr. Hurlston.

"What is the meaning of this provision which you make for——"

"For the man you know by the name of Ralph Fletcher? Well, I had two objects in view. In the first place, he once rendered me, as I think you are aware, some service when I had fallen overboard off New York. I don't admit that he saved my life; but still it's my desire that he should be amply recompensed for what he did on that occasion. In the next place, I wished to offer him some inducement to go to Australia and remain away from the country in which your father resides."

"But how is the man to learn your intentions with regard to him?" asked Fenwick, in astonishment. "You have no means of communicating with him."

"Have you observed the date of that will?"

"No."

"Well, if you'll look at it again, you will see that it was signed to-day. I drew it up myself, a couple of hours ago, and got two tradesmen in the neighbourhood to be witnesses."

"Still I don't understand how——"

"I am going to explain what you appear so anxious to learn. Returning from Cannon Street, yesterday, I saw a man walking on before me, whom I recognised as Ralph Fletcher. Quickening my steps, I overtook him, and

laid my hand upon his shoulder. He started aside, nervously, and showed some alarm on seeing me; but I managed to reassure him, and we turned into a side street, near Doctors' Commons, where I had a long conversation with him."

"Were you able to ascertain the cause of his strange behaviour when I saw him here?"

"It is as I suspected; your father is the man who denied that he had given him permission to go ashore, and, in consequence, caused him to be sentenced to flogging."

"But my father has no recollection of the man's name."

"That's not very difficult to explain. I have reason to believe that Richard Fuller deserted from the *St. George*. At anyrate, it now appears that when he left that ship, and entered the merchant service, he changed his name to Ralph Fletcher, and has retained that name so long that he has almost forgotten he ever had any other. He told me yesterday that the object of his calling here was to ask me to recommend to him a skilful doctor for his daughter, a girl of nineteen, who is labouring under a pulmonary affection. He has already had the advice of two medical men, neither of whom gives much hope of her recovery, if she remain in this country. Now, the climate of Australia is well known to be of the greatest benefit to people labouring under lung disease, so I suggested that he should take her thither. He then, after some hesitation, informed me that his means were insufficient to enable him to adopt that course, as he had only a few pounds of his savings remaining. It seems that the girl lives with her father, and supports herself by working at a West-end shop. Well, I told him that I was on the eve of leaving for Port Adelaide, offered to pay for both their passages, and promised to get him some employment in connection with the works about to be commenced on my property. Rather to my surprise, instead of immediately accepting this offer, he asked me how I had become acquainted with you. I told him just as much as it was desirable that he should know, and assured him that you had no unfriendly feeling towards him; at the same time informing him that his having been seen watching Wilming-ton House, and his strange manner on that occasion, had caused me to suspect that Captain Towers was the person on whom Fletcher had sworn to take vengeance."

"And he admitted that your suspicions were well founded?"

"Yes; but he added that he no longer had

any intention of resorting to the slightest violence to secure his object."

"Then there is some reason to hope that the man's vindictiveness has given place to better feelings?"

"I am not at all convinced of that, for he went on to say that by withholding for a time a secret of which he is possessed, he should ensure himself all the revenge he desired. It may be that he has dwelt so long upon the one idea of vengeance that his mind has become affected; but still I cannot help coming to the conclusion that his enmity towards your father is almost as great as ever."

"Did he ultimately accept your offer to send him and his daughter to Australia?"

"Yes, and I then promised him that he should receive an annuity after my death, upon condition that he left England within a month, and never returned. If I only get him away from this country, you need have no further anxiety on your father's account; and that I shall succeed in doing so, Fletcher's affection for his daughter is an excellent guarantee."

"But what can be the nature of the secret which he spoke of?" said Fenwick, after a pause.

"I am unable to form any conception respecting it, beyond the fact that it is one—if we may credit Fletcher's statement—which, when known, will involve your father in great disgrace for the remainder of his existence."

Fenwick remained silent for a minute or two, and vainly endeavoured to discover some clue to the secret alluded to by Fletcher.

"After all, I don't think it's worth while to give yourself any trouble about the matter," said Mr. Hurlston. "Even if Fletcher is not indulging in an empty threat, the chances are strongly in favour of his taking his secret with him to Australia, and then——"

"He told you that the mischief was to be occasioned by his withholding *for a time* certain information that he possesses. Assuming that any real importance is to be attached to what he has said, there is no doubt that it will suit his purpose just as well to communicate what he knows after his arrival in Australia as at any other time. Do you think it would lead to any good result if I were to obtain an interview with this man?"

"Not the slightest," replied Mr. Hurlston, decisively. "Besides which, he prevailed upon me to give him a solemn pledge that I would not reveal his address to any one. I suppose he has some fear that your father might again cause him to be apprehended as a deserter,

even after the lapse of so many years. *Chat échaudé craint l'eau froide.*"

"At anyrate, I think it judicious to let my father know the man's real name."

"Do as you please in that respect; but there is no necessity for your mentioning that I am about to send him out to Australia."

"Am I to understand you have some objection to my telling him that?"

"Decidedly so; because I promised Fletcher that his intention to go abroad should not be communicated to Captain Towers."

"Then be assured I shall say nothing to him on that subject."

"I suppose, Fenwick, you wouldn't like to run the risk of offending me by doing anything contrary to my wishes, eh? Well—well, put the will back into the drawer, and give me the key."

"It is perhaps fortunate for me that you haven't made any severe demand upon my obedience, or you might be called upon to add the codicil you spoke of just now," said Fenwick, laughing.

And then he took leave of the old man, and ascended to his own room to look for the letter which he had received from Chuffneythorp. After a brief search he found it lying among some magazines. A glance at its contents showed that the Christian name of the Pennington referred to was not mentioned. Still he thought it would prove his willingness to afford all the information in his power, if he placed it in an envelope, and sent it to the earl's solicitors, with a line stating from whom it came. Accordingly, he enclosed it to the address of those gentlemen, and, having rung the bell, requested Bridget to take it to the nearest post-office. Turning towards the chimney-piece, he found a letter lying there which had arrived that afternoon from his brother Frank, who still remained at Liverpool. From it Fenwick learnt that his father intended to marry Susan Harding in a week's time. "He has asked me," wrote the curate, "to be present at his wedding; but I have sent him a letter in reply declining to comply with his request, and remonstrating with him in strong terms on the impropriety of such a marriage. Let me beg of you, dear Fen, to see him once more before the union takes place, and entreat him to reconsider his decision. Perhaps you may at least prevail upon him to defer the wedding for a time."

And then the Rev. Frank Towers went on to say that he was unable to come to London, and have an interview with his father, owing

to the absence in Ireland of the incumbent of the church.

When Fenwick had finished reading his brother's letter, he drew a chair near to the fire, and remained for some time in deep thought. He was interrupted in his reflections by the appearance of Mrs. O'Sullivan.

"One of them footmen tould me to ask whether ye wanted the carr'ge to take ye back to Brook Street."

"I had quite forgotten that it was waiting. Say that it may go home at once."

"And I've also got to minton, that a gintleman called here this morning, and wished to see ye."

"Do you know his name?"

"He said it was Mистер Bender; and he left word that he would come again at six o'clock to-morrow evening."

"I don't know anyone of that name. Did he mention what he wished to see me about?"

"He did not," replied Mrs. O'Sullivan; "But he said somethin' concernin' a letter he had received from yer fawther."

"From my father!"

"Yes; and that's all I can tell ye," she said, closing the door, and leaving Fenwick free to continue his reflections.

He had felt great repugnance to visiting Wilmington House again, in accordance with his brother's desire; but now it occurred to him that Mr. Bender's communication gave him a fair excuse for calling upon his father.

CHAPTER XI.

THE following morning, Fenwick entered Mr. Hurlston's room, and found him preparing to go out.

"I have just received a letter from Fletcher," said the old man, in a voice much weaker than usual. "He informs me that he has seen a ship which he is anxious to secure passages in, and I am going to pay the money for him to the brokers to-day."

"I am glad to find that he has quite determined upon leaving this country; but I wish it were possible to ascertain, before his departure, the nature of the impending disgrace which is ultimately to fall upon my father. I have more than once asked myself whether it can have any reference to the woman my father is about to marry."

"I will put the question to Fletcher when I see him to-day; but even if it is so, there is no probability of his giving me any information on the subject."

They went out together, and Fenwick walked with Mr. Hurlston as far as Waterloo Bridge.

"I have a great deal to do this week," said the old man, holding out his hand, "for I have to prepare for a long voyage."

They parted, but Fenwick, by an impulse he could not restrain, turned and watched the receding figure of his friend till it was lost in the crowd of passers-by. Then he went on to the railway station, and took his seat in a train for Wilmington Heath.

Three-quarters of an hour after, he was standing before the iron gates leading to his father's house. A servant, who was a stranger to Fenwick, admitted him; and, after waiting a few minutes in the hall, he was ushered into a room, where he found Richard Towers, seated in an easy chair, by the fire, and the housekeeper, standing at one of the windows, apparently intent upon a piece of tatting, which she held in her hand.

"Well, Fenwick, what's your object in coming to see me?" asked Richard Towers, wheeling round the chair he was sitting in, and facing his son. "I should have thought that the reception you met with when you were last here would not have encouraged you to pay me another visit."

"I believe you sent some one to me yesterday."

"You are mistaken, sir; I did no such thing."

"At anyrate, he mentioned to the servant who saw him, that he had called upon me in consequence of his having received a letter from you."

"Oh! ah! I think I know to what you allude. It is some days since I wrote the letter in question, but I didn't request the man to call upon you. The fact is, I had reflected upon what you told me about that sailor, and I thought it desirable to communicate the particulars of the case to a detective. Having given you as my authority for the statement, I suppose he called upon you, in the hope of getting some further information."

"You told me that you had no recollection of a man called Ralph Fletcher. I have since ascertained that the name was only an assumed one. When he served in the Royal Navy, he was known as Robert Fuller."

"I recollect the man well," said Richard Towers, after a pause.

"He alleges that you caused him to be unjustly convicted of desertion; that he received fifty lashes for the supposed offence; and that his young wife, on hearing of his terrible punishment, fell ill and died."

Fenwick looked steadily in his father's face,

and was by no means re-assured on seeing a sickly pallor spread over it.

"He was lashed, but—How dare you come here to make such an accusation," said Richard Towers, with sudden fury.

"The accusation does not come from me," replied Fenwick, quietly.

"Where is this scoundrel to be found?"

"I am unacquainted with his address, and I know of no means by which you could obtain it."

Susan Harding left her position at the window, and came towards Fenwick.

"How did you ascertain the man's real name?" she said, looking at him intently.

"It was communicated to me by the same gentleman who first gave me an outline of the man's history," replied Fenwick, coldly.

Richard Towers rose from his chair, and paced hurriedly up and down the room. At last he stopped opposite to his son.

"If you have any means of communicating with Robert Fuller, let him know that, for the future, I shall carry a revolver after nightfall. He has already, I feel certain, been the instigator of a murderous assault committed upon me. If any attempt of that kind is renewed, I shall be fully prepared to punish those concerned in it as they deserve."

"You have more than once made some mysterious allusions to your having been attacked, but as you hinted that I was implicated in the matter, I attributed it to a disordered imagination, occasioned by—"

Fenwick glanced significantly towards a decanter of brandy and a glass, which stood upon a small table.

"I shall not give myself the trouble to enter into any further explanation, beyond saying that both Miss Harding and myself were mistaken in supposing that you had any hand in the matter," said Richard Towers, doggedly.

"I wish to have a few minutes' private conversation before leaving."

"There is nothing you can have to say which requires any secrecy."

"I am anxious to speak to you about your approaching marriage."

"You are going to try to dissuade your father from making me his wife," said Susan Harding, slowly. "He is not so weak-minded as to allow himself to be influenced by anything *you* have to say. Do you wish me to retire?" she asked, turning towards Richard Towers.

"Certainly not," he replied.

"But *I* wish to have an opportunity of speaking to my father, without the constraint

which your presence necessarily imposes," said Fenwick, calmly.

She made no reply, but compressed her lips tightly, and took a seat near Richard Towers.

"I have received a letter from Frank, in which he begs me to ask you at least to defer this marriage," said Fenwick, addressing his father.

"Not for a single day beyond that I have fixed for it. He has refused to be present at the ceremony because he considers that I am about to unite myself to a woman who is not quite my equal in social position. I don't attach any importance to ridiculous distinctions of that kind. Miss Harding is a woman of unblemished reputation, therefore I need never be ashamed of having chosen her to be my wife."

"I had very little hope of being able to induce you to alter your decision," said Fenwick.

A servant entered and handed a scrap of paper to Richard Towers, on which a name was written in pencil.

"Tell him to come in. He may as well see Fenwick, as he is here."

"Who is it?" asked Susan Harding, rising from her chair as the servant left the room.

"The man who called upon Fenwick yesterday," replied Richard Towers, handing her the piece of paper. "He came here once before, but you didn't see him on that occasion."

She looked at the name, and then made two steps towards the door; but at that moment it opened, and Mr. Bender entered. She turned quickly, and walked to the window.

"Being in the neighbourhood, I thought I'd better give you a call, captain, just to let you know that I'm not neglecting that little matter of yours," said the detective, smoothing his hat very carefully with his coat-sleeve, and bestowing a gracious smile upon Fenwick. "Called on that gentleman, as you mentioned in the letter, thinking that he——"

"Well, well, I don't wish to hear your reasons. You have not been able to apprehend the man, and you have very little hope of doing so, if I am not mistaken."

"I should have had him safe enough before now, if you hadn't misled me by a wrong description," said Bender, assuming an injured look.

"What do you mean?"

"Mean? Why, that you told me he had a scar upon his cheek, and had a dark beard."

"And so he had."

"Then he must have disguised himself, for I

was in company, soon afterwards, with the man whose name you mentioned in the letter, and his chin was as bare as the bowl of a tobacco pipe. But it was the scar as I looked for most, and now I've no doubt it was an artificial one you noticed."

Mr. Bender then proceeded to give a detailed account of his meeting with Ralph Fletcher at the sign of the "Blue Unicorn," in Finsbury.

"You hear, Fenwick; this rascal Fletcher is the very man who attacked me," said Richard Towers.

"Any way, you see, I'm not to blame that he wasn't taken into custody long ago," said Bender.

"My son here informs me that the man's real name is Richard Fuller."

"Well, really now, that's very coorious," said the detective, reflectively. "I remember as he had the letters '*R. F.*' tattooed on his wrist. I suppose," he continued, turning to Fenwick, "you can't give me any information as to where he lives?"

Fenwick unwilling to break the promise given to Mr. Hurlston, briefly replied in the negative.

"Well, if you should happen to learn anything more about him, p'raps you'll send me a few lines directed to the City detective department."

"I have forgotten your name."

"I'll write it down for you," said Mr. Bender, promptly, and then he began very deliberately to search his pockets for a pencil, glancing occasionally in the direction of the window, where Susan Harding was standing with her back towards him.

"Where is the paper, Susan, that I gave you just now?" asked Richard Towers; Mr. Bender's name is already written upon it."

"It's here," she answered, holding it out in her hand, but still keeping her face turned towards the window.

Mr. Bender walked quickly to her, and took it. As he did so, he went close up to the window, and looked into the garden for a moment. Then, turning himself rapidly, his eyes met those of Susan Harding, and he nodded to her familiarly.

"That's my name, sir," he said, returning to Fenwick, and handing the paper to him.

Again glancing towards Susan Harding, but this time with a strange look of perplexity, Mr. Bender made a flourish with his hat, intended for a bow, and took his departure.

ENGLISH AND FRENCH BURLESQUES.

WE should, indeed, send our writers to France to learn the true spirit of burlesque. They never forget that first principle—the being in earnest—which is also helped by a certain exaggerated splendour. In English historical burlesque, for instance, from Henry the Eighth to Guy Fawkes, the whole is as familiar and boisterous as an Ethiopian serenade's buffoonery, or the blackened Christy Minstrels' performance of "Norma." From the outset there is no attempt at realising the character of the time or the situation. The figures are, as it were, ticketed with names, and dressed a little after their models, and a faint outline of history followed, but there the likeness ends; the rest is wild and irregular tumbling, fooling, singing, punning, dancing, &c. Any diligent frequenter of say the Strand Theatre, will find it difficult to point in the performances of that facetious trio, Messrs. James, Thomas Thorne, and Fenton, any special character belonging to the long series of pieces they have played in. They each expend an extravagant, untiring energy, that shows them to be conscientious performers, bent on producing what seems absurd. Further, many historical personages themselves must have been conscious that they were lending themselves to a farce; and at times may have been inclined to be merry under their functions and prerogatives, and to have gone through them in a grotesque sense. This, a little exaggerated, should be the foundation of burlesque; and there are very few of the French school that will not bear this test.

There is one, perhaps most familiar of all to the public, whose merits as a composition have been overpowered by the extraordinary popularity of its music. No one will be at a loss to guess the name of "La Grande Duchesse," associated with the triumphs of the free and too familiar Schneider. A word might be said for the piquant and nicely suited character of the music itself; but the story itself is admirably done, and still more admirably entangled with the musical pieces, which seem to come in without violence. Going a little back, it will be seen how the burlesque notion of this plot might have been evolved. It came to England, and was hewn and chopped by the adapter's adze to fit English players and audiences; and it will be seen how the former imparted to it *their* notion of burlesque.

The picture of the tiny German Court, with

its exaggerated etiquette, needless abundance of state officers, armies of thirty men, &c., has often made the traveller smile. Some, too, in their descriptions might use the phrase, "burlesque of a Court." If they were asked why they used such a phrase, a man like Thackeray might answer with those few most amusing pages in "Vanity Fair," where the Court of Pumpernickel is described gravely and without any straining at comic effect—the cabal about the dancer, the intrigues of the little officers of the court, &c.—and yet the effect is that of exquisite burlesque. It arises from the contrast between the grand machinery properly belonging to great kings and courts being applied to some petty matter. The best part of the whole is, the actors themselves being utterly unconscious of their producing this effect, and being firmly persuaded of their being equally important with those who play on greater stages.

In this view these two consummate French artists and collaborators, MM. Meilhac and Halévy, approached their subject. Everything in that story is burlesque, yet a burlesque regulated by probability and seriousness. The very story was chosen with a view to contrast such elements, and was only what might have taken place at such a court. Thus the mere framework, a young spoiled princess, newly come to power—such power as it was—surrounded with intriguing ministers no higher than valets de chambre in mind and intellect, taking fancies to men in the ranks and giving way to other extravagancies, was quite in keeping. So with the intrigue for the foreign alliance with Prince Paul, his tutor and diplomatist Baron Grog; in fact, the whole has quite the flavour of the old "Memoires Secrets," or the "Lettres Galantes," written from Spa or some other hotbed of intrigue. All who have been at the Variétés will recall the wonderful ensemble, the surprising delicacy with which it was played by the original corps; and though the piece abounded with *cancans* and other extravagances that seemed not in keeping with probability, there was this to be remembered, that all seemed the possibly unnatural ebullition of absurd people, giving way to violent and insane bursts of spirits; with a sort of *arrière pensée* for the audience, that they were trying obsequiously to court favour with their wild young mistress, and imitate her in all her pranks. Indeed, it was easy to see, from these capital and round characters—*Boum*, *Prince Paul*, *Fritz*, and the *Duchess* herself—that these writers had powers far above libretto writing—a belief since justified

by that exquisite little drama of "Frou-Frou," now the success of the day.

But when this burlesque came, in due course, to England, to be adapted, translated, and acted, the transformation was marvellous. The most instructive part was really to see the different view of the whole taken by the English players. It seemed to explain quite clearly what is called the present decay. Their object, it was evident, was not to set off the piece, but to get "fun" and business for themselves out of each part. It was assumed that if *Prince Paul* was played as a mere imbecile, *unconscious* of his own folly, an audience would assume this was the imbecility of the actor. At all events, "that sort of thing would not tell." The actor would make it tell "by business." It was astonishing how unmeaning the whole became by the adoption of such a principle—how stupid, and what a gross and clumsy joke the whole seemed! The ignorance began with the manager who placed the scene on the great stage at Covent Garden, with *spectacle* and a vast Covent Garden army, disposed with all a stage-manager's art. We think of the little cabinet pictures at the Variétés—small as Thackeray's little chapter—and see at once a pleasant garden of burlesque, utterly choked by this vast, clumsy tree, with its large branches. It was at once lifted from burlesque into serious grandeur: for there was nothing ridiculous in so sumptuous a court, with its army and dresses.

This was the first blunder. Next, every character, in detail, was mistaken, and played according to the glorious tradition of English burlesque. First, the lady who acted the *Grand Duchess* gave her fantastic orders, carried out her curious whims, with an air of despotic stage grandeur worthy of the Italian opera. She was called the English Schneider; but that artist, with all her shortcomings, was at least the character she played. The *Prince Paul* at the Variétés was an exquisite specimen of the character known as *Le niais*—that *unconscious* imbecility which betrays its own folly at every turn—excellently revealed in the scene where he reads the passage from the *Gazette D'Hollande*—the complacent and idiotic enjoyment in which, and his ignorance of its ridicule, was exquisitely done. In London, this was put into the hands of Mr. Stoye, a trained burlesque actor, who proceeded to make a "funny" part out of the materials. First giving it a lisp, talking of the "wight wing" of the castle, he proceeded to turn it into an *active* and energetic

"funny" man, now speaking in a deep bass key, now running up a sort of gamut of odd gutturals, now simulating grotesque terror, now skipping about with odd steps; in short, making the whole raw, coarse, and without any distinct character whatever. There was a great deal of laughter at these antics—funny enough in their way; but all reference to the piece was lost. The spectator thought fondly of the subdued, graduated, delicate, and infinitely more droll *Prince Paul*, at Paris. More lamentable was the contrast in that character of true comedy, *Fritz*, the low soldier, shy, yet familiar, coarse, impudent, amusing. All this was delicately conveyed by Dupuis, contriving to interest us by a hundred little touches. In England, a stiff player, and tolerable singing, made the usual conventional "rough soldier" out of the part, of coarse and strong flavour; but with "business," and therefore acceptable to the groundlings.

TABLE TALK.

THE *Queen's Messenger*, in connection with which the names of Lord Carrington and Mr. Grenville Murray were brought so prominently before the public, seems to be rehabilitated under the title of the *Plain Speaker*. It appears in the form of a newspaper in blue covers, measuring six inches by four, and we gather from the preface that the editors consider this the proper size for a news-sheet. They say "a troublesome mistake of custom alone maintains the common form of newspapers." There may be something in this; but most English journals are printed in England, and in cases where this practice does not hold, a paper six inches by four may be more convenient for importation than one of larger size. The first of a series of leaders on "Our Leading Men," is devoted to an attempt at wit and sarcasm, at the expense of the editor of the *Times*, Mr. Delane, from which that gentleman will not suffer much loss, either of character or prestige. The writer in the *Plain Speaker* concludes his sketch of Mr. Delane's connection with the *Times* in these words:—"A few dull fellows alone stand round the fallen chief, once so mighty. The stately paladins and invincible heroes are gone; and another generation may feel the same sorrow in thinking of Mr. Delane, as travellers who, passing by the site of a forgotten temple, mark goose and wild ass grazing upon weeds and thistles amidst ruined fragments of font and altar." We willingly leave the task of remark-

ing who is the *goose* to our readers. The inference is obvious. And few persons, however terrible the tyranny under which they groan, would not rather bear it than forward "properly authenticated cases of nepotism, corruption, oppression or injustice," to the editor of the *Plain Speaker* for redress, with the promise of which, and a statement of the terms of subscription for the parliamentary session his little news-sheet ends.

IN TABLE TALK, some time ago, we expressed our regret at the untimely decease, in the zenith of its art usefulness, of our old friend the British Institution. Under the auspices of Mr. Gullick and a number of influential gentlemen, a New "British" is now opened at 39, Old Bond Street. It has been instituted with a view of affording "living painters in oil colours" a more extended field than existed for the display of their works, and will be opened annually in March, at a time when no other exhibition is available to artists. It will provide painters of merit and skill, not themselves members of the Academic body, with an opportunity of placing their works fairly before the public; and will afford to such Academicians as choose to avail themselves of its walls the means of exhibiting to advantage such works as they may not care to reserve for the Academy in May. A most important branch of the service rendered to art by the old "British" was the display of the masterpieces of the old painters lent by private persons, and many of them were suffered by their owners to remain for some time after the closing of the exhibition, in order that students might copy such of them as they thought best deserving their attention. The exhibition at the Academy just closed supplies, to some extent, this want caused by the discontinuance of the exhibition in Pall Mall. Now with two exhibitions yearly at the Academy, and in the event of its success, of which, if well managed, we feel assured—two of a rather different character at the New British, in Old Bond Street—neither artists nor the public can complain of a lack of opportunities of seeing the best works of the modern English school. We shall take an early occasion for making one or two notes of what we think the features of the new exhibition.

AMONG THE PRELATES in attendance upon the conferences of the Œcumenical Council now sitting at Rome are men of the highest principle and scholarship. There are, however, exceptions to this rule; and among them

Casimir Alexis, Bishop of Laval, seems rather wanting in episcopal dignity—if we may judge from a recently published letter of his addressed to the editor of a French newspaper, the *Semaine Religieuse*. The worthy prelate is very angry indeed with the course of conduct pursued by a brother bishop, Monseigneur Dupanloup, of Orleans. His letter, though short, is energetic in the extreme. He says, "People are always talking in the diocese of Laval about Monseigneur Dupanloup." But they are not to do so any more; for says the bishop, "Well, there must be an end of that." But, instead of meeting the arguments and the precepts of the Bishop of Orleans by dogmas and the citation of authorities, the Bishop of Laval proposes to set his flock an example: "I would rather die," he says, "fall dead at once, than follow the Bishop of Orleans in the paths in which he is now walking, and into which the supposed authority ascribed to him is deluding some members of my diocese." Surely this is but weak argument; and we scarcely expect a bishop, addressing the errant members of his fold, to employ the "wish-a-may-die-if-I-don't" style of remonstrance, familiar enough in our ears, truly, but happily not from the occupants of the episcopal bench. His letter, which he requests the editor of the *Semaine Religieuse* to give "the widest possible circulation," is hardly likely to be very potent in confuting the heresies promulgated in the diocese of Laval by so able a preacher as the Bishop of Orleans.

A RATHER NICE QUESTION, involving points of gallantry, perhaps, as much as those of law, is not unlikely to come before the French civil courts. As Isabella Queen of Spain, her husband permitted that royal lady to dispose of her property as she chose; but in her altered condition, as a queen dethroned and in exile, Don Francisco de Assis thinks his wife has no right to set him at defiance in the disbursement of sums of money he appears inclined to save. Ex-queen Isabella asserts her royal prerogative to squander her fortune as she pleases. Don Francisco appeals to the lawyers to decide when a queen, not *de facto*, if, indeed, *de jure*, merges into the status of any other married lady, and is subject in all things to the control of her lawful spouse. We must leave this curious point of law to be settled by the acute gentlemen of the French bar.

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ONCE A WEEK

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THE MORTIMERS: A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK II.—CHAPTER I.
CANTABS.

CAMBRIDGE



IN MAY!

To Cambridge in the full tide of festivity, which the boat race week brings to gladden the hearts of undergraduates, let us turn, O reader. What memories the name recalls! Of Jack's fair sisters and Harry's pretty cousin; of bright flowers,

bright toilets, and bright smiles. Of music and feasting galore; of late breakfasts and charming luncheons in old college rooms, made delightful by the unwonted presence of ladies. Of that stroll along the Parade with your friend and cigar, with the rosebuds in your coats; and after the cigar, those strawberries at Oakton's and ices at the Thursleys'. Then the papers at the Union,—though who cares then for news,—your five o'clock tea, and then the perilous drive with the ladies in the hands of your rash charioteer through the narrow dusty lanes to Grassy. The race, the rushing and shouting on the bank, the bumps, the

cheering. And then the more dangerous return, to dinner, a dance, the A. D. C., or Gillespie's. Who would not like to have it all over again? But this cannot be. There, in May, are the ladies, the feasting, and the flowers; but they are not for us. The rooms Jack lived in have had other tenants since; the place knoweth him no more. No longer thence pours out upon the night the Bacchanalian chant, led by his deep bass voice. If we would hear it, we must follow him to his cattle-run in the wilds of Australia? Ted, whose broad shoulders and stout heart lugged the boat through the water for full three years in our time, is now moiling over the minute details that make up our system of law; Peter is left, but he is a don, and might hardly care to renew his acquaintance with the Bohemians of the outer world. It has struck many a kind heart with sadness, that visit to Alma Mater after a lapse of years. There are the rooms, where friendly faces were wont to greet you; as you look up at the windows you almost expect to see them peep out and beckon you up for a chat, and a pipe and a draught of college ale—but, though all else is unchanged, the friends are gone. They swell the ranks of the Church and the Bar, or otherwise occupy themselves on the stern business of life. Some the shadowy hand has already summoned from the busy scene. And only a few roughly-cut initials, or inky characters, remain to tell of their existence to the generations of new men.

But the last day of the May races is not a fitting occasion for sober reflections—unless your boat happens to have been bumped—nor was Charles Mortimer, at any time, much troubled with serious thought. He was sitting in his rooms, on the Parade, looking over King's, and giving a last look at the arrangements, now nearly complete, for giving a satisfactory luncheon to his aunt Margaret, and Mabel Despencer, and one or two friends, before going down to the boats. If he had an anxiety, it was that the champagne should be well iced. He was in the last term of his third year at Tudor College, and as became a third-year man,

he spared no expense in making his little entertainments perfect—that is, as perfect as might be; for a year after, he used to call all Cambridge cookery “savage;” but he was well satisfied with their primitive dishes then. He had acquired a number of refined, but most expensive tastes at the university, quite as a matter of course; and had managed to run up some terribly long scores; but Cambridge tradesmen are generally obliging enough in the matter of “ticks,” and certainly, to their credit be it said, they never troubled him much by pressing at inconvenient times for the payment of their little accounts. Sometimes, however, he was dunned by certain irregulars of the army, who profit by the wants of university men—professional cricketers and others of the tribe, and occasionally a well-known gentleman of “horsey” appearance, and a brother-in-arms, of the Jewish persuasion, who are both willing to accommodate gentlemen who happen to “run short of cash towards the end of a term” with almost as many five-pound-notes as they please, accepting as a fair equivalent for each one of the same a bill for six pounds at a month; which, as it is only taking about two hundred and forty per cent. per annum of their infant borrowers, cannot, as usury goes now-a-days, be considered a high percentage, leaving anything more than a fair margin for risk, and—for profit. But these debts were trifles, and easily staved off or paid. The real difficulty came at the end of the year, when tailors’ bills, and horsekeepers’ bills, and bills for wines and cigars, and a dozen other things, were sent in, enclosed in the blue envelopes, so neatly addressed to “Charles H. Mortimer, Esq., Tudor College;” or when, at special times and seasons, as after some bad nights at loo, or a hard week at Newmarket, when scarcely a single favourite won, Mr. Charles Mortimer found it very necessary to raise the wind to a rather stiff gale.

“Charles, my boy,” Sir Harold had said to his nephew, just before he went up to Cambridge, “take a veteran’s advice. Never gamble: you may see high play—I mean high for young men—don’t let anything tempt you to join in it. Nobody will think the worse of you for saying ‘No,’ and meaning it.”

The young man intimated that his father had, on many occasions, given him the like caution.

“Ah!” said Sir Harold, “your father has, in his time, lost more than he could afford. I have had to—that is—make him temporary advances, more than once, years ago. But he, like a clever man, learnt his lesson, after one

or two essays. He burnt his fingers, and has not, ever, touched cards or dice-box since.”

“The old story, I suppose, of the burnt child fearing the fire,” said Mr. Charles, with a slightly sarcastic smile; intended, probably, to imply that he was a moth with fireproof wings.

“Charles, do be serious,” said his uncle, religiously.

“I am, sir, perfectly,” he replied, seeing from Sir Harold’s look, that trifling would be dangerous.

“I hope you will not only listen to my advice in this matter, but act upon it.”

Charles’s answer was that he would profit by it.

“I had occasion to advise your cousin Malton, some two years ago, when he left Mr. Campbell’s charge. How he has acted you know; he is fast squandering his property, and when a man has parted with his money, he sometimes, as you are aware, squanders his reputation and his honour after.”

“Well, sir,” answered Charles, “I have the doubtful advantage of having no lands to encumber, and nothing in the Funds to sell out.”

“No,” returned Sir Harold, still very grave, “but all young men of your expectations necessarily have temptations placed in their way. You will associate with men of much longer purses than your own. Don’t be afraid to say, ‘I can’t afford it,’ when you are asked to join in any extravagant pursuits your income will not permit you to enter upon without embarrassing yourself. Never play high. You might win, but also you might lose; and,” added the baronet, “you must pay a debt of honour without an hour’s delay.”

His nephew assented to Sir Harold’s good advice with great readiness, and professed himself determined to be very prudent.

“If,” said his uncle, “you should be silly enough to lose more than you can pay, don’t have recourse to any schemes for raising money, but apply to me at once.”

Recollections, possibly, of Robert’s doings, made Sir Harold give this last instruction to his son. Charles took his uncle’s counsel and warnings in the way in which good advice is commonly taken, as something kindly meant and well enough in its way, but not precisely applicable to one’s own case, and without the least apprehension of ever having occasion to make use of it. When the occasion comes, the advice is never thought of until it is too late. So it was with Mr. Charles. A little after his first year at the university, he found

himself, as he expressed it, when writing of his difficulties to his mother, "in a bit of a hole." He did not tell her how he had got into trouble, but intimated that it would not require a large sum to set him straight. She, poor, fond lady, had a good cry, completely deranged her nervous system for a week, or more, and sent her "dearest Charlie the enclosed first half of a ten-pound-note," adding also that the remaining half would follow by the next post, begging him not to let his father know, as she was sure he would be dreadfully angry; and expressing a hope that he would be more careful in future. Mr. Charles laughed very much when he got the half-note, which, however, he did not hesitate to crumple up and place in his pocket-book, remarking, to his friend Jack Childers, that even "half-a-loaf was better than no bread." Jack was himself always in a chronic state of debt and impecuniosity, and, as it was the end of the term, I believe these two gentlemen both tipped their gyps, and paid their railway fares into Berkshire, out of poor Mrs. Robert's little offering.

Once at Madingley, Mr. Charles was safe from duns, at all events; and within the thick grey stone walls of Childersley Abbey his friend, Jack, enjoyed an equally secure and unmolested retirement.

When they met at the Assize Ball at the county town, Charles had the pleasure of telling his friend that he had been successful in "working the oracle," as he termed getting money from his uncle. Jack envied him, congratulated him, asked the favour of a small loan from him, and "wished he could bleed his old screw of a father to the same tune,"—all in the short interval between two figures in a set of quadrilles.

If the extraction of gold was the idea intended to be symbolised by the term *bleed*, then there was indeed very little blood in the veins of the branch of the Childers family to which Mr. Jack belonged; though some of its ramifications which shot up into the peerage were reputed to be very wealthy, and absolutely rolling in that commodity of which their poor brother, Mr. Jack, stood so much in need.

"Working the Oracle" is in modern, as it was in ancient, times, often a very delicate operation. Charles Mortimer, however, easily managed to propitiate Sir Harold, who was always very indulgently disposed towards his nephew. He had his father's trick of taking his uncle *hors de combat*—after dinner, when the good old knight had laid by for a while

his shield and buckler, and, sitting without his shirt of mail, defenceless, fell an easy prey to the well-planned manœuvres of his opponents, who, father and son, were skilful tacticians. Indeed, so unequal was the strife, that Sir Harold commonly surrendered at discretion, rather than make a show of fighting, and then having to retire discomfited at last. Other scrapes followed at intervals, but Mr. Charles had always some means or other for getting out of them. Miss Margaret or his mother would help him, or, as a last resource, he could apply to his father. He never troubled Sir Harold, his uncle, about *bagatelles*, but only drew upon him when he wanted a good round sum.

In his Easter vacation he had spent his time at Madingley, as usual. As they were walking in the shrubbery one day, Miss Margaret had said:

"Mabel and I must come to Cambridge to see you take your degree, Charlie; must we not, Mabel? You know we have never seen your university, though I recollect once, many years ago, seeing Oxford with your uncle Harold and his wife. We should be delighted with everything, should we not, Mabel?"

To which Miss Mabel Despencer, now a fine tall girl of eighteen, with matchless dark eyes, and long flowing auburn hair, made reply:

"Of course we should, auntie dear. And we will go and make uncle Harold come too, if we can. I almost think I shall wear a cap and gown myself. And we will see all there is to be seen—the dear old grey buildings, and the churches, and all the other lions."

Thus the ladies had settled it between themselves; but to their plans Mr. Charlie only vouchsafed in reply a prudent "Hum! yes. Delighted to show you over the old place, I'm sure."

The fact was, he had a modest hesitation about pressing them to come, for there might, at the last moment, be some slight hitch in the proceedings. He did not feel *quite* sure about his degree, though he never hinted this state of mind to them. To have the audience there, in their seats, ready, and the curtain drawn up, the play begun, and no Prince of Denmark forthcoming, is a very unpleasant state of affairs.

After considering the matter carefully, when the subject was mentioned again, at dinner, Mr. Charles suggested that a couple of days could be spent much more agreeably during the May races, when the town is full of people, and all sorts of things are going on, than in

merely coming up for the purpose of seeing him take his degree. This suggestion was received without any suspicion by the ladies, and Sir Harold declared that, if he possibly could, he would accompany them, and see the sport himself. Thus it came to pass that Miss Margaret and Mabel, having Sir Harold for their faithful esquire, were staying at the Stag, in Cambridge, and about to honour Mr. Charles with their company at luncheon. They did not keep him waiting long, coming up the staircase, preceded by his gyp, who threw open the door of the sitting-room for them with almost as much grace as a London flunkey could have done it with.

"Oh! Charlie, you *have* got a pretty room!" exclaimed Miss Mabel, looking round at her cousin's pictures, statuettes, drinking-cups, and nick-nacks.

"And a capital look out from his window," said Sir Harold; "open, and plenty of air."

"And that beautiful romantic old chapel opposite," Miss Margaret remarked. "I'm sure you often go."

"Sometimes," Mr. Charles replied. "You must see it yourselves before you go back to Madingley. It is always admired. The stained glass is very fine, and I believe very curious. There is a legend that it was taken out and buried in Oliver Cromwell's time, and so put out of the reach of his iconoclasts when they visited Cambridge. That will account satisfactorily for its peculiar helter-skelter arrangement now. I know I never can make out what the pictures mean."

The popping of a champagne cork now called their attention to the luncheon, which was pronounced excellent by them all, and very creditable to the Tudor butteries and kitchens. The old Stilton and the college ale Sir Harold especially approved, saying, that after his own it was the best he had ever drunk.

So the time passed very rapidly and agreeably until, at Mr. Charles's suggestion, the party sallied forth to see some of the lions of the place.

CHAPTER II.

THE RACE.

THE "Sedgy Cam," as Pope called it, is about Cambridge, as very many of our readers are aware, a narrow and sluggish stream, pursuing a sinuous track through low-lying and fenny country as it flows slowly on to the sea. The course over which the races are rowed is distant about a mile and a half

from the town, and lies between a point on the river called Baitsbite and the bridge at which the Eastern Counties Railway crosses it. With real boating men the towing-path along which they can run, keeping abreast of the boats and cheering their friends on to victory, is the favourite place for witnessing the races from; but by far the larger number of spectators congregate in a meadow designated Grassy, where on foot, horseback, or from their carriages they have a splendid and uninterrupted view of the most critical part of the race. It was to this spot that Sir Harold, accompanied by the ladies and Mr. Charles, were driven in a waggonette from the Stag.

The evening was extremely fine, a kindly shower had effectually laid the dust an hour or so previously; the sun shone brightly, and nothing was wanting to complete the beauty and liveliness of the scene. On their way down Mr. Charles, who held "the ribbons," managed skilfully to pass a number of vehicles of all descriptions that were wending their way to the same spot. And occasionally a smart dog-cart and weedy thoroughbred from a hack stable, driven by a jaunty and sporting undergraduate, would give our friends the go-by. These passings and repassings, together with the extreme narrowness of the lanes into which they turned after quitting the high road, caused the ladies some slight alarm and the worthy Baronet considerable amusement, and at the same time afforded his nephew an admirable opportunity for displaying his nerve and skill in the command of his horses. The stirring and animated scene, however, that presented itself to the eye, when they were safely drawn up close by the bank of the river at Grassy, more than repaid Miss Margaret and Mabel for anything of alarm or apprehension they had suffered on the way down.

Under the stunted willows, along the bank, was drawn up a line of carriages, most of them occupied by ladies, in their brightest attire. Over a ditch in the middle of the field, a group of young men were "larking" their hacks, and ever now and again, a loud peal of laughter from the bystanders told that some unlucky horseman had come to grief, and fallen in.

About the sward were many parties and groups of strollers, who edged nearer and nearer to the bank, as time wore on, and the signal for the start was every moment expected.

The background to this pretty picture was composed of a few tall old elms, standing in the meadows, and by the tower of the quaint old fashioned church, and a few picturesque

cottages on a hill that constitute the village of Ditton.

Jack Childers, Esq., was one of the jumping party, and, bespattered with mud from a fall, he came up to speak to Sir Harold, who made a few good-humoured jokes about his inability to keep himself in his saddle. It was, however, quite unlike a Childers to make a trouble of such a trifle; so, laughing at his accident and his splashing, he took up his stand by Miss Margaret and Mabel, pointing out to them the different boats as they rowed down the river to the starting-posts.

"What a number have gone by already!" exclaimed Mabel; "and really the river looks so narrow, it seems hardly possible for them all to find room in it."

"I suppose two or three go at a time," Miss Margaret remarked, evincing great interest in the novel scene.

And then Mr. Charles and his friend explained for the benefit of these ladies, what the writer of this history may here do for such of his fair readers as are following him as he details the fortunes of the two heroes of this story; namely, that on a narrow river like the Cam, it being out of the question for a number of boats to row abreast of each other, the object in the race is for each boat to catch the boat immediately in front of it before it is caught by the boat next behind. In technical language, it is a "bumping" race; and the bump is made when the bow of one boat touches any portion of the boat before it.

Miss Margaret and her fair charge, having been made to comprehend the conditions of the coming struggle, took the greatest interest in watching the competitors as they paddled slowly by.

They were made aware of the approach of an old friend by the Scotch accents of someone greeting Sir Harold very heartily; and, turning round, saw the stout but active figure of Mr. Campbell, now a resident don, elbowing his way through the crowd, and, with Sir Harold, making towards them. Mr. Campbell was very warm from his exertions in endeavouring to find his friends' carriage; but, when comfortably seated in it, soon recovered himself, and entered into conversation with Miss Margaret and Sir Harold upon the engrossing topic of the day.

"What a very pretty uniform," Mabel remarked, as a crew in green and white jerseys and straws passed by them; "I like it better than the scarlet or the light blue."

"You have not seen the First Tudor pass you yet, Miss Despencer," said Mr. Campbell.

"Have we not, Mr. Campbell?"

"No, not yet, I think."

"That is your club, Charlie," she said, turning towards Mr. Charles, who was lounging carelessly by the side of the vehicle, and nodding to a great many of the men who passed them.

"Our club, Miss Despencer, our club," said Jack Childers. "I belong to it: you see I wear the straw."

"Come, come, Mr. Childers," said Campbell, "I belong to it also, and might wear the straw with about as much propriety. You know you never rowed in your life."

"Here they are! here they come!" cried Charles Mortimer, as a boat containing eight oarsmen in dark blue uniforms came into sight.

"They look very fit," said Childers to Charles; "I shall win my bets, I'm sure."

"They are about the best crew on the river, I believe," replied Charles.

A few more strokes of the long light oars brought the boat exactly opposite our party. Here they "eased," or rested, for a few seconds before proceeding up the course to the starting-post.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Charles Mortimer and Childers in one breath, and each looking at the other for an explanation, "what's this they have done?"

"Why, where's Courtenay?"

"What in the world have they changed the 'stroke' for at the last moment?"

"Who is that they have got in his place, though?"

The word was given by the coxswain, "Get ready all!" The backs of the rowers were straightened, their arms stiff, their oars in position. "Go!" and the boat instantly shot forward. The sun shone out from behind the clouds and bathed the golden hair of Reginald Erle in yellow light. He was the "stroke," vice Courtenay disabled.

"By Jove!" exclaimed both gentlemen again. "Why it's that fellow Erle who was stroke of the second boat."

"Good-bye to my poor little bets," groaned Childers.

"Good-bye to our chance of rowing head of the river!" exclaimed Mortimer.

"What can have become of old Courtenay, I wonder?" demanded a friend who had joined them. They were informed directly afterwards by another friend who had just crossed from the opposite bank that Courtenay had broken a small bloodvessel in the race of the evening before, and that consequently he

was not allowed by his medical adviser to take any further part in the contest.

"I wish I'd known it. I should not have been in such a deuced hurry to lay that other ten pound to five," said Childers, with a very blank look.

"I hope we are not all sold," said Mortimer.

"What a very fine looking young man!" was Miss Margaret's involuntary exclamation, as she saw Reginald Erle, when the boat shot past them.

"Ah! he is a fine fellow," echoed Sir Harold. "Who is he, Campbell?"

"Well, his name is Erle. He is a great friend of mine; our acquaintance began by his coming to my lectures, and we have grown to be very fast friends. He'll do well," said the stout Scotch gentleman, with enthusiasm, "he'll do well to-day in yonder boat, and better still in the examination room. I'm—I'm proud of him."

"Dear me," was Miss Margaret's observation.

"What Erles, Campbell? The Blankshire Erles?" inquired Sir Harold.

"No, not the Blankshire Erles," replied Mr. Campbell, significantly. "I do not think you know his family."

"He is a fine young man," said Sir Harold.

The crews having now all gone down to the starting-posts, which are placed at equal distances from one another along the towing-path at the extreme end of the course, the men were busily occupied in making their final preparations for the struggle. A crowd of rowing men in every variety of costume, from the bright coloured jersey and white flannels, to the plain pea-jacket and trousers of every day life, accompanied the boats to the starting-place, and held themselves in readiness to run down the path abreast with the boats of their several colleges, and cheer them on to making a bump, or warn them by their shouts of the impending danger.

The Tudor boat, in which Erle rowed stroke, started in the second place. If they could succeed in bumping the boat before them they would gain the coveted distinction of "rowing head of the river;" if they did not make a bump, their opponents behind were very dangerous, and were sure to be close upon them all the way. The excitement of the partisans of the three first boats was very great. It was a nervous moment for our hero, who had been pressed into the service of the crew in the place of the invalided Courtenay at the last moment. But he had naturally a

good courage; and, like a plucky man, determined then and there on victory. His crew were very sanguine, though rather stale, from the effects of the previous races on the preceding evenings; and their friends on the bank assured them that "bar accident, success was certain."

By the company at Grassy the signal for starting was anxiously expected. After the lapse of a few minutes, that seemed very long in passing, the report of a cannon was heard.

"The first gun," said Charles, and Jack, and everybody else.

After the expiration of a minute, another report reached their ears.

"The second gun," cried everybody.

And then the third report, and a roar, in the distance, of voices shouting and calling, and at Grassy—the general expression in everybody's mouth, "now they're off!"

The roar of voices, and the tramp of many feet on the towing-path, grew louder and louder, until the crew in the first boat came into sight, and close in their track Erle's boat followed.

The shouting and cheering, as they approached Grassy, was immense.

"Well rowed—well rowed!"

"Now, Tudor, you've got them!"

"Put it on—spirt!"

Both Sir Harold and Mr. Campbell were as much excited at the close contest as any younger spectators of the scene, and both, standing up in the waggonette, cheered very lustily, and with commendable vigour, as the foremost crew made a gallant effort to spirt, and gained some way; but, foot by foot, and, at last, inch by inch, Erle's boat gained on them, till, just opposite Grassy Corner, the bump was made.

Well nigh spent with the exertion, the Tudor crew hoisted their flag amid shouts from all quarters of "Well rowed all!" They quickly drew in to the bank, and the other boats in rapid succession passed them, some making bumps, some getting clear over the course.

The affair is soon over when the boats have once started. Our friends, when the field was a little clear, drove safely back to the Stag, where Sir Harold had ordered dinner, at which meal Mr. Campbell and Mr. Jack Childers were his guests. The Baronet drank a bumper of wine after dinner to the victorious Tudor crew.

But the victory proved a dear one to Reginald Erle.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE EASTERN ARCHIPELAGO.

NO. V.

FOR much interesting matter regarding the Birds of Paradise, into which we have not space to enter, we may refer to the thirty-eighth chapter of Mr. Wallace's second volume, which is devoted to these birds; and many details regarding their habits not noticed by our author will be found in the third chapter of Mr. Bennett's second volume.

These articles would be incomplete without some reference to the most important fruit-trees of the Eastern Archipelago—such as the bread-fruit, jack, dookoo, mangusteen, pine-apple, plantain, rambootan, custard-apple, mango, guava, and durian; which, with many others, are found in Singapore, and in many of the cultivated parts of Borneo, Java, &c. Dr. Collingwood, from whose book (see p. 271), we extract the above list, observes with regard to the durian, that it is a great favourite with some, and detested by others; and in Mr. Wallace and Mr. Bickmore we have the two parties very decidedly represented. When brought into a house, the smell of this fruit is so offensive that some persons can not even be made to taste it. This was Mr. Wallace's own case when he first tried it at Malacca; but in Borneo he found a ripe fruit on the ground, and eating it out of doors, he at once became a confirmed durian-eater. The fruit is round, as large as a good-sized cocoa-nut, of a green colour, and covered all over with short stout spines, the bases of which touch each other; and it is thus so completely armed, that if the stalk is broken off, it is not easy to raise it from the ground. The rind is so thick that from whatever height the fruit falls, it is never broken. From the base to the apex are five faint lines, where, with a heavy knife and a strong hand, the fruit may be divided. These sections divide the interior into five cells, each of which has a satiny white lining, and is filled with an oval mass of cream-coloured pulp in which are two or three seeds about the size of chesnuts. "This pulp," says Mr. Wallace, "is the eatable part, and its consistence and flavour are indescribable. A rich butter-like custard highly flavoured with almonds, gives the best general idea of it, but intermingled with it come wafts of flavour that call to mind cream-cheese, onion-sauce, brown sherry, and other incongruities. Then there is a rich glutinous substance in the pulp, that nothing else possesses, but which adds to its delicacy. It is neither

acid, nor sweet, nor juicy, yet one feels the want of none of these qualities, for it is perfect as it is. In fact to eat durians is a new sensation, worth a voyage to the East to experience." For so delicious a fruit as this, need we wonder at Dr. Collingwood's statement that at Singapore fifty dollars are given for the produce of a single tree?

Mr. Bickmore, on the other hand, finds in the durian "a pale, yellow, salvy, half-rotten substance having an odour of putrid animal matter. Its simple odour is generally quite enough for most Europeans."

In his remarks on the true bread-tree, or bread-fruit, Mr. Wallace is much more enthusiastic than Mr. Bickmore. It grows in several parts of the Archipelago, and has been largely cultivated around Amboyna, where Mr. Wallace first tasted it. "It is generally about the size of a melon, a little fibrous towards the centre, but everywhere else quite smooth and puddingy [we thank Mr. Wallace for this expressive term], something in consistence between yeast-dumplings and batter-pudding. It is baked entire in the hot embers, and the inside scooped out with a spoon. I compared it to Yorkshire pudding; Charles Allen said it was like mashed potatoes and milk. In no way is it so good as simply baked. With meat and gravy it is a vegetable superior to any I know, either in temperate or tropical climates. With sugar, milk, butter, or treacle, it is a delicious pudding, having a very slight and delicate, but characteristic flavour, which, like that of good bread and potatoes, one never gets tired of." Considering the high character assigned by Mr. Wallace to this fruit, it is no wonder that he suggests that we should try to acclimatise it in our West India islands; and, as the fruit will keep some time after being gathered, we might then be able to obtain this tropical luxury in Covent Garden Market. Mr. Bickmore states that the *Artocarpus incisa*, which we presume is the species referred to by Mr. Wallace, has already been introduced from the Pacific Islands into the West Indies* and tropical America; but, so far from endorsing his enthusiastic views regarding its culinary value, states that "it tastes somewhat like a potato, except that it is very fibrous."

* Many of our readers will, doubtless, recollect that the main object of the voyage of the *Bounty*, in 1787, under the command of Captain Bligh, was to discover whether the bread-fruit tree could be transplanted from Otaheite, and cultivated in the West Indies with success. The well-known mutiny that occurred shortly after the *Bounty* left Otaheite, of course, stopped the experiment.

In these hard times, and with all the olden cheap quarters—such as the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands, &c.—over-peopled, it may be worth while mentioning that Mr. Wallace has discovered a country where a person may live luxuriously, in so far as his food is concerned, for twelve shillings a year; and as this happy land, the island of Ceram, lies within three degrees of the equator, the expenses of dress need hardly equal those of food. For his most interesting account of how to make sago bread and cakes, with little labour or preparation, from a tree-trunk twenty feet long and five in circumference, we must refer to pages 216-222 of his second volume; and the food is not to be despised. "The hot cakes are very nice with butter; and when made with the addition of sugar and grated cocoa nut are quite a delicacy. They are soft, and something like corn-flour cakes, but have a slight characteristic flavour, which is lost in the refined sago we use in this country."

There is unfortunately an article of diet occasionally enjoyed in the Malay Archipelago that is not yielded by the vegetable kingdom—namely human flesh. Mr. Wallace gives us no information on the subject further than hinting at the dangerous character of the savages inhabiting the best Bird of Paradise localities. Mr. Bickmore, however, speaks very decidedly regarding cannibalism being still practised by the Battas—a hill tribe inhabiting the central parts of Sumatra, and quite distinct, as a race, from the Malays. He spent (we are happy to say, safely) some time in a Batta village, where there were two German missionaries one of whom stated "that he knew of a Batta who had been guilty of stealing an article of only very little value, according to their ideas of wealth, yet he was seized, his arms extended at full length and fastened to a bamboo, a sharpened prop placed under his chin, so that he could not move his head, and in this condition he was bound fast to a tree. The knife was then handed to the native who had lost the article, and he was ordered to step forward and cut out of the living man what piece he preferred. This he did promptly; the rajah took the second choice and then the people finished the cold-blooded butchery, and thus their victim died. This revolting feast, he assures me, took place but a short distance from the village where he resides. The parts that are esteemed the greatest delicacies are the palms of the hands, and, after them, the eyes. As soon as a piece is cut out it is dipped, still warm and steaming, in *sambal*, a common condiment of red or

Chili peppers and a few grains of coarse salt, ground up between two flat stones. Formerly it appears to have been the custom to broil the human flesh, for Mr. Marsden states that, in December, 1780, a native of Nias, who stabbed a Batta at Batang Taroh, the river I crossed on the suspension bridge, was seized at six one morning, and without any judicial process, was tied to a stake, cut in pieces with the utmost eagerness while yet alive, and eaten on the spot, partly broiled but mostly raw."

"The Battas," he adds, "certainly do not eat human flesh for lack of food, nor wholly to satisfy revenge, but chiefly to gratify their appetites. The governor at Padang informed me that these people gave him this odd origin of their cannibal customs:—Many years ago one of their rajahs, committed a great crime, and it was evident to all that, exalted as he was, he ought to be punished, but no one would take upon himself the responsibility to punish a prince. After much consultation, they at last hit upon the happy idea, that he should be put to death, but they would all eat a piece of his body, and in this way all would share in punishing him. During this feast each one, to his astonishment, found the portion assigned him a most palatable morsel, and they all agreed that whenever another convict was to be put to death they would allow themselves to gratify their appetites again in the same manner, and thus arose the custom which has been handed down from one generation to another to the present day" (p. 446).

From this demoniacal feature of human nature, let us turn to a lovely scene beneath the waters, for the sketch of which we are indebted to Dr. Collingwood. The scene that he so vividly depicts occurred on the Fiery Reef, in the China sea; and he dropt, as it were, upon it while on a voyage to Labuan. "The surface of the sea was perfectly smooth and glass-like, so that at the depth of sixty or seventy feet we could see the anchor lying at the bottom among blocks of coral as distinctly as if it had been but six feet from the surface. Taking a boat, with a couple of rowers, I left the ship and steered in search of the shallowest portions of the coral-strewn sea. A short row brought us upon a two fathom patch, over which I allowed the boat to drift slowly; and leaning over the side and looking down into the mirror-like sea I could admire at leisure the wonderful sight, undistorted as it was by the slightest ripple. Glorious masses of living coral strewed the bottom; immense globular madrepores, vast overhanging mushroom-shaped

expansions, complicated ramifications of interweaving branches, mingled with smaller and more delicate species—round, finger-shaped horn-like, and umbrella-form—lay in wondrous confusion: and these painted with every shade of delicate and brilliant colouring—grass-green and deep blue, bright-yellow, pure white, rich buff, and more sober brown—altogether forming a kaleidoscopic effect of form and colour unequalled by anything I had ever seen. Here and there was a large clam shell (*chama*) wedged in between masses of coral, the gaping zigzag mouth covered with the projecting mantle of the deepest Prussian blue; beds of dark purple, long spined echini, and the thick black bodies of sea cucumbers (*Holothuria*), varied the aspect of the sea bottom. In and out of these coral groves, like gorgeous birds in a forest of trees, swarm the most beautifully coloured and grotesque fishes, some of an intense blue, others bright red, others yellow, black, salmon-coloured, and every colour of the rainbow, curiously barred and banded and bearded, swarming everywhere in little shoals which usually included the same species, though every moment new species, more striking than the last, came into view" (p. 147).

In his observations on this naturalist's paradise, Dr. Collingwood made "the discovery of some *Actinæ* of enormous size, and of habits no less novel than striking." The habits are not so novel as our author supposes; similar habits having been observed and recorded by Mr. Peach, regarding the common jelly-fish* of our own coasts. In a shallow spot he saw a large and beautiful convoluted mass of a deep blue colour, which, at first, he supposed to be a coral. On placing his hand upon it, the peculiar tenacious touch of the sea-anemone revealed its true nature, shreds of the tentacles adhering to his hand. When fully expanded it measured fully two feet in diameter. While standing in the water, admiring this beautiful creature, he noticed a pretty little fish about six inches long, and beautifully banded, vertically, with alternate white and orange rings, hovering just over the anemones, and remaining there so long as to excite Dr. Collingwood's suspicion that some connection existed between the two. This suspicion was subsequently confirmed on a reef off Labuan, where the same sea-anemone was

seen to discharge six of these fishes from its interior or digestive cavity. There are at least two anemone-inhabiting fishes in these seas; the second species having black and cream-coloured vertical bands, instead of orange and white. Dr. Collingwood observes that the nature and object of the connection yet remains to be proved. Mr. Peach, if we rightly recollect, suggests that, in the case of the jelly-fish, the fishes swim under the umbrella-like disc for shelter from their enemies. We should be glad if some of our readers who are dwellers on the sea-side would turn their attention to this singular subject.

Subsequently, while sailing homewards, in June, in the Atlantic (lat. 13° S. long. 22° W.), he fell in with numbers of splendid *Physaliæ*, or Portuguese men-of-war, the largest having the well-known bladder 8 in. long and 2½ in. above water, while the greatest vertical circumference was 10½ in. Each of these magnificent creatures, as it floated by, had beneath it a peculiar appearance, which was found to be due to a shoal of fishes from 2 in. to 6 in. long, and looking precisely like the pilot-fish, accompanying the man-of-war, under the protection of its vertical appendages. Under small *Physaliæ* the fishes were small, while under large species the fishes were comparatively large. Considering the intensely irritating properties of the tentacles, it is strange that fishes should choose such a harbour of refuge.

And now it is full time that we should bid our adventurous travellers farewell. They have all done well in their respective departments; but, as we observed in our first article, Mr. Wallace stands *facile princeps*.

We are not informed as to the number of specimens brought home by Dr. Collingwood. Mr. Bickmore tells us that he fully succeeded in accomplishing the object of his voyage, (which was to re-collect the shells figured by Rumphius) and gives us a list of the birds which he collected on the island of Buru; while Mr. Wallace's eastern collections included no less than 125,660 specimens of natural history, of which 310 were mammals, 100 reptiles, 8,050 birds, 7,500 shells, and 109,700 insects. In so far as new animals are concerned, it is in the insect world that he has made the most discoveries; in illustration of which we may mention that he has brought back, at least, nine hundred species of Longicorn beetles, and two hundred of ants new to European cabinets. Mr. Wallace is still a comparatively young man, and we heartily trust that his travels are not yet over.

* The sea-anemones and jelly-fishes are so far allied that they are both included in the subkingdom, *Calenterata*, the former belonging to the class *Anthozoa* (known also as Polyps or coral animals), and the latter to the class *Hydramedusa*.

THE MODERN CYNIC.

HE is not, in spite of his name, altogether a creature of recent growth, having, by some process of natural selection, developed into rudimentary life very early in the history of man. But of late years his race has enormously increased; and it may be interesting to note some peculiarities of a being whose uses on the earth are so small, and yet his increase so rapid. For, at the present rate of progression, which is as nearly as possible, I take it, in a geometrical series, we may expect a time when the other types of our common family will disappear, and all be merged in the cynic, pure and simple.

To describe him generally, as has been inconsiderately done, as a man who admires nothing, is far too vague to admit of being accepted as a definition. Like all animals of complex machinery, he cannot be defined in a phrase. Man, for instance—the genus to which he belongs—has been defined a great many times, but hitherto without much success. He has been called a parliamentary animal, but rooks, at least, hold solemn conclave and parliament; a cooking animal, which would not convey to non-cookers any very vivid impression about him; and a gambling animal, but I believe I have seen monkeys gambling. So with the different species of man. There is no possible phrase which can at the same time exclude other species and comprehensively describe one.

It is true that the modern cynic admires nothing which other men have done. This, however, permits him to concentrate his admiration the more intensely on himself. It may be also said of him that he does nothing; but then this enables him the more strongly to respect himself for what he might have done. It may be further said, that he attains to nothing; but then he has the power of considering what he might have achieved, and with what superior brilliancy of execution, had he chosen to enter the arena. His name is little known to the outer world, perhaps little respected by the circle to which he belongs; but what is the possession of a reputation to that of the power to deny oneself the pleasure of gaining it? Speech is silvern, but what is silence? And if work is noble, how much more noble to do nothing?

His kind may be subdivided into several principal, and a very large number of subsidiary, classes. Our limits only allow us to mention very briefly two or three of the prin-

cipal classes; and it is felt that some apology is due, not so much to the general public as to the race of modern cynics themselves, for the seeming slight implied in so brief a notice of them. It is not, however, that their greatness and dignity are lost sight of, but for other pressing reasons, that the subject is treated with such scant consideration. And, besides, these brief remarks are intended only as suggestions, to be followed up by some student of larger powers and greater leisure than the present writer.

The literary cynic is, of course, the first that demands attention; not because he is the most important, but because he makes the most noise. He is to be found in certain papers, daily and weekly; in one or two magazines; and in a few novels. He is not, as a rule, scholarly; nor have his writings that fine polish which the English language has been proved able to take; nor perhaps has his thought so much depth as can be observed in the works of the ancient philosophers: but he makes up for these defects by smartness, and by an overwhelming sense of superiority, which, spite of a possibly kindly heart, cannot refrain from breaking out into sneers. He acts as critic, either on books or on men and women. If on books, he has one rule to start with, and one method of treatment. An impossible standard is set up—that standard of excellence which our cynic would reach himself, were he to write; and then, this being implied rather than explained, he proceeds to show how far short the writer has fallen. And whereas the old *Edinburgh Review* mode of criticism was to pick out all the beauties, our modern critic picks out all the defects. This done, he next holds up to popular scorn any stray bits where the writer has plunged into enthusiasm, fallen into genuine feeling, or become a victim to virtue and goodness. All these backslidings are carefully picked out and paraded, labelled as “gush.” To prevent “gush,” indeed, is the literary cynic’s chief function.

Care must be taken to distinguish between him and another of a different race; but, in some respects, resembling him—the prig. Priggishness has its own self-respect, or rather veneration. But prigs believe in each other: they see in each other the virtues which they admire in themselves, and they gush solemnly over them. A prig cannot contain himself. “See,” he says, speaking of another, but looking in the glass the while, “see how good he is, how well he does his work, what an earnest sense of duty he has, what feelings of responsibility, what contempt for the commoner

paths of frivolous men!" For the prig is nothing without his sense of duty, and his pitying contempt for other men. We common men are despised, too, I admit, by the cynic; but in a different way. He sneers at our follies, in which he joins: he despises our virtues, some of which he shares: he curls his lips at us because we do our duty without an earnest sense of responsibility, and yet he has none himself. The prig, in fact, honestly tries to possess the qualities he admires; but in the attempt assumes a more than mortal share of them. The cynic calls the attention of the world to our shameless want of these ornaments of the soul, and thinks it superfluous to put them on himself.

The literary cynic on men and women is perhaps more at home than with books, for there are a great many books which he cannot touch at all, for want of the necessary scholarship. Now every body can talk of men and women, and especially of women.

Here his most telling method of approaching the subject is to deprecate any belief in the possibility of virtue or disinterestedness existing as a motive cause. The actions of men, unfortunately, proceed from so many and complex impulses that it is always possible to assign one which is base and unworthy. If, for instance, a public deed is done which involves the sacrifice of much money or much labour, what more rational than to suppose it done with the view of getting the praises of men? If the labour of a life culminates in some great thing, which brings money as well as a name, what can one, who reads the soul so well as a cynic, attribute it to, but to a thirst after filthy lucre? When there are several ends to be attained, let us, he says, always choose the least noble. When several motives may have been at work, let us, says the cynic, choose the basest. Thus, the desire of all women is to get married. The love of a wife depends upon the amount of money she can spend on dress. Virtue, in our maidens, means compliance with the prejudices of the world. Conversation with ladies, so far as men are concerned, is a kind of gilded hypocrisy. Society means a crush at an "at home;" a dinner-party of twenty people—strangers to each other; a futile attempt not to appear bored; a perfectly transparent pretence at enjoyment. Men prefer the conversation of "young persons" connected with the ballet to that of ladies; they have no reason in desiring success, except that they will get money by it: and such terms as friendship, gratitude, and honour, are now tolerably devoid

of meaning. Clergymen are, by the nature of their profession, humbugs; to bait a parson is, therefore, a commendable act; in doing so, it is fair to throw in his teeth that his last preferment was to a larger stipend; and that he had an eye to a bishopric in publishing his last book. All political men have one single aim, and no other—to get, or to keep, place. And the little things that we were once taught to regard as among the most pleasant in life, the gathering of families, the talking over old times with brothers and cousins, and the joyous festivities that have no *gêne*—these are the saddest humbugs of modern civilization, the things that poison our cup of happiness.

With these maxims, and some few others, the literary cynic makes out pretty well. He is especially successful with the undergraduate mind. The style of the thing is easy to catch, though to do it well requires considerable practice and dexterity; and the youth of appreciative cleverness finds that it soothes his mind, and gives a stimulus to hope, to learn that the world in general, which he has yet to conquer, is so imbecile, base, and sordid.

The art cynic has a narrower sphere of action. You may find him about the picture galleries in the season. He stands before a picture, where the whole soul—a poor thing, perhaps, but all he has—of the artist has been poured out. Women, looking at the fixed thought on the canvas, are moved to tears. He, however, is unmoved. After mature consideration, he turns to his friend, and whispers audibly,—"Ah! yes—pretty well—the old trick you see!" So the simple country folk dry their eyes, ashamed to be seen crying over a picture which is done by the "old trick," and go on to the next, all their pleasure spoiled.

Sometimes he gets an opportunity of speaking out in some review. Then, taking the pictures in detail, he has a chance of a sneer at every one.

The theatrical cynic—he never laughs and never cries; needless to add, that he never applauds. His finest opportunity is, when the whole house is in tears. He is wont, then, to turn round to the man with him, whose throat is, perhaps, choked at the moment with a suppressed sob, and to whisper, loudly: "Very badly done, all this. I never saw a worse piece." So that the people all round leave off crying, and try not to feel interested in the heroine's sufferings. In the same way, when all faces are broadened with grins, when boxes and pit and gallery are roaring with laughter,

he will sit with unmoved countenance, or remark, impatiently: "Dear me! this is very melancholy!" which has an effect upon the audience, similar to that of oil upon the unnumbered smiles of ocean.

Some nights ago, I saw two of these critics at the — Theatre. The house was in great temporary distress, showing a display of pocket handkerchiefs quite unusual. The two cynics were not greatly advanced in years, the elder being apparently about twenty-one. They listened with grave faces at the funny parts, keeping, I fancied, a furtive eye one on the other, to detect and deride any accidental lurking smile; but when we came to the misfortunes of the heroine, and the agony was piled up higher than we could well bear, these two young heroes, with whom intellect and an overwhelming appreciation of art altogether conquered and drove out sympathy, and with whom the critical faculty so far mastered the emotional, that they had lost the power of feeling the *thought*, in watching for the *expression* of the poet, suddenly rose, moved by a common impulse. "Bah!" said the younger, with an ineffable air of disdain, "what rot it is! Let us go to the Argyll." So they went. I felt sorry, on subsequent reflection, that the two latter clauses of this brief criticism had been added. The first simple interjection would have involved and fully expressed the next explanatory phrase; while the third detracted from the critical merit of the whole. Now the full-grown cynic would have gone, perhaps, to the same temple of high art as the lads, but would never have proclaimed his intention of going there. The two boys were, after all, only boys. As for the rest of us, we cried and laughed at the foolish piece till our sides ached.

I saw a young, but very promising, cynic, the other day, in church. Three boys were sitting together, he in the middle, but I think he had come alone. The other two pulled out their Bibles, and followed the lessons, joined in the chants, sang the hymns, knelt for the prayers, and generally comported themselves with becoming reverence and propriety. He, however, my cynic, regarded them, to right and left, with an air of the most sublime contempt. He would look round the church, as if to call attention to this preposterous humbug, and his own superiority. In deference to the service, he stood up for the hymns and sat down for the lessons; but he neither knelt, nor joined in the singing, nor affected anything but the most supreme boredom at the whole thing. "Religion?" he

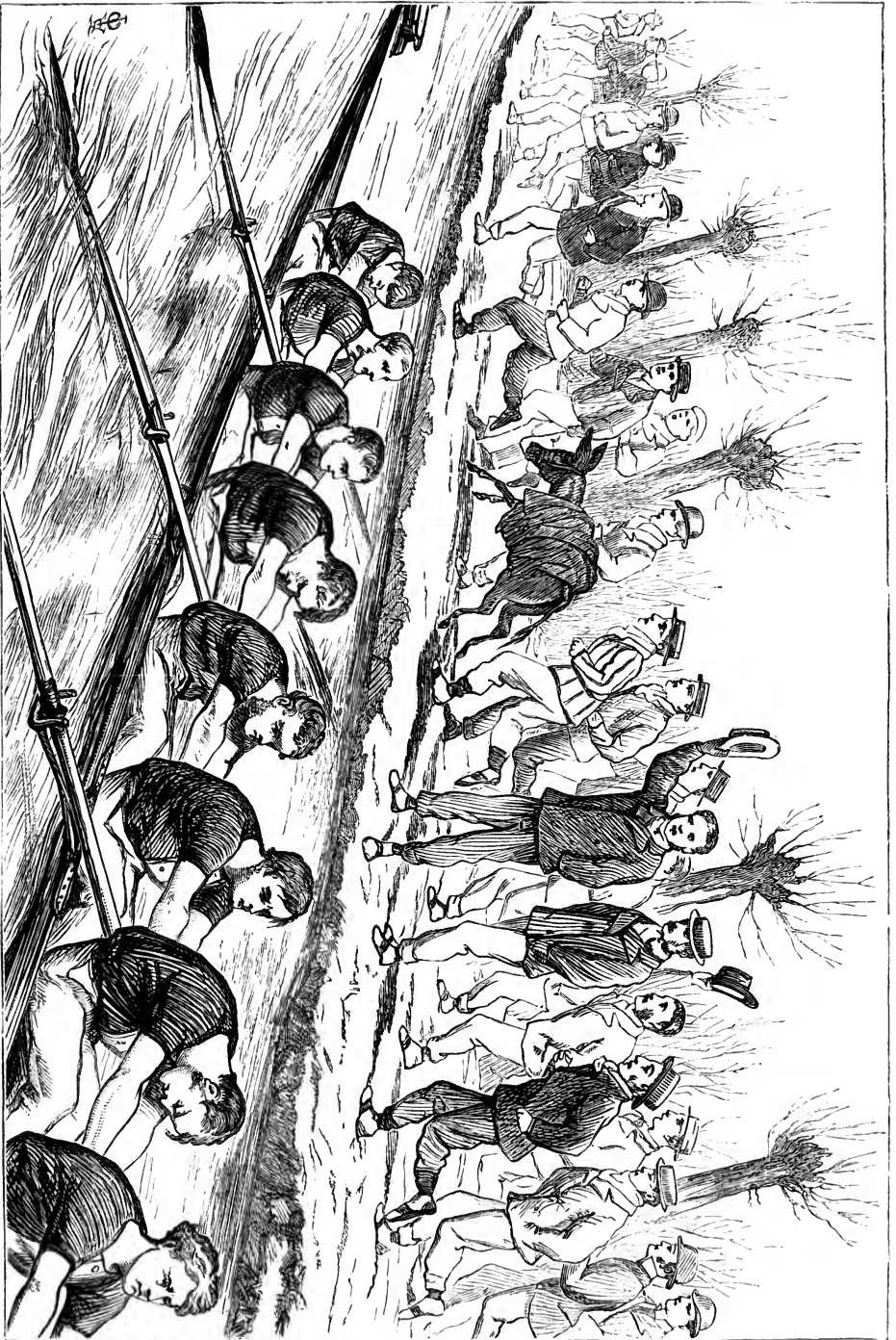
seemed to say; "Prayers? piety? Dear, dear, what absurdity!"

A boy whom I contemplated with mingled feelings, and who will, quite certainly, get on in the world.

Cynics are very often produced by a course of education from prigs. Thus, there is a certain school that I know of—it would be invidious to the rest to name it—where the masters are, one and all, models of priggishness. I believe that if a man is there for six months without developing into the true priggish type he is sent away. Their Virtue, Sense of Duty, Earnest Feeling of Responsibility (all in capitals), are so prodigious that the boys are very apt to become, as it were, cloyed with goodness which is made too sweet for them. So that the chosen ones go up to the university ready for cynicism of the most ordinary kind, if they have not already learned it, and fall an easy prey to the literary cynic.

Of inferior quality, but, perhaps, more effective in his small way, is the domestic cynic. He it is who takes care that none of his household shall be possessed by any foolish notions of admiration towards their friends or acquaintances. He knows the cheapness of a friend's wine; the reason—sordid and selfish, of course—of another friend's kindness to him; the untrustworthy character of a third; and so on. Much as we may admire the other kinds of cynics, I confess that towards this one I feel a repugnance, owing chiefly, I suppose, to some defect in my organization, that forbids me to write about him with philosophical calm.

But these great and noble men whose aim it is to show the world what it really is, and not what it pretends or hopes to be; to put down sentiment, enthusiasm, and all the things which foster absurd friendships, excessive admiration, fanatic principle, devotion to a cause, loyalty, and the like passions, which have produced such grave disasters to the world; who have discovered the real roots of love, and now hold them up to the derision of mistaken humanity; who tear his fancied honour from man, and her imaginary modesty from woman;—what things too great shall be said in their praise? and what reward shall be bestowed upon them from a grateful people? My own pen is too feeble, although my spirit is so willing, to do them justice. Posterity will perhaps, when no illusion is left, and none of the old world reverence for age, dignity, and principles, award to the modern cynic his fit meed of glory.



Once a Week.

“WELL ROWED, ALL!”—(Page 138.)

[March 19, 1870.]

CAUGHT BY A THREAD.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

CHAPTER XII.

THE preparations for the marriage of Florence Clare were almost completed, and it was arranged that the ceremony should be performed at Upfield Church by the rector himself. When Sir Charles Pennington was informed by his solicitors of the offer made by the Earl of Bideford, he unhesitatingly declined such terms, and awaited the decision of the Committee for Prerogatives with an unwavering confidence that was to some extent shared by Mr. Bentley Wyvern. The fact of a proposal of that kind having been made was at once communicated to Mr. Clare, and very naturally removed any lingering doubt that he might otherwise have entertained as to the propriety of consenting to his daughter's union with Sir Charles until the justice of the claim in question was legally recognised.

"Depend upon it," said the rector softly, rubbing his hands together, and regarding his future son-in-law with a benevolent smile, "they have ascertained that it is quite hopeless to contest the matter. The possession of so much wealth will entail upon you many serious responsibilities," he continued, more gravely.

"Oh, well, yes, undoubtedly it will," replied the baronet, with a half-comical look: "but you have no idea of the heavy responsibilities which are caused by the want of it. One of the greatest pleasures I look forward to is being able to pay my debts."

"A very proper feeling—very," said Mr. Clare, turning towards the window, and watching the heavy flakes of snow which were rapidly covering the grounds of the rectory. "There will be several livings in your gift," he resumed, after a minute's pause, "and I trust that when they become vacant you will be very careful whom you select to fill them. One in particular, the holder of which is nearly eighty years of age, is worth a thousand a year."

"You mean that of Ormsgill. I have heard my father mention it. Well, I know what you wish me to promise in respect to that."

"You really—in fact, I hardly expected —" stammered Mr. Clare.

"Oh, I understand. You are anxious that I should present it to poor Mr. Rushton, your curate, when it becomes vacant; and I assure you that I am quite willing to do so."

"You draw conclusions rather hastily," said Mr. Clare, with something of disappointment in his tone. "I had no intention of making such a request, for Mr. Rushton has already been promised the living of Haggerthorpe by Lord Avoncourt."

"So I have heard; but it's worth very little, and I know that Rushton has a large family. However, as you don't mean him, I suppose you wish to recommend someone else."

"There is no one—at present—whom I desire to recommend; but I should be glad if you would consult with me upon the subject whenever you have to select a successor to Dr. Morley."

"Oh, certainly," said Sir Charles.

And then a servant ushered in Mr. Tom Coomber, followed, a moment after, by Mary. The rector received his visitor very cordially; but, being Saturday, Mr. Clare shortly after retired to his study for the purpose of writing out a sermon for the following morning.

"I hear that you are a candidate for the representation of Littleborough," said Sir Charles, observing that Mr. Tom Coomber was staring pensively at Mary.

"Eh? Oh! yes; the governor insisted on my going into Parliament, so I was obliged to yield to his wishes. Have you seen my address to the electors? It was published in the *Times*, yesterday, and I think it reads very well. In fact, I've been complimented respecting it by several of my friends."

"Yes, I saw it," replied Sir Charles, "but it was rather too long to read the whole of it."

"I wish you had waded through all of it, because it really is good. Indeed I may say it's first-class," added Mr. Tom Coomber, turning towards Mary.

"I hope it may have the desired effect upon the free and enlightened electors of Littleborough," said Mary, smiling.

"There's not much doubt about that, according to all I have heard. The governor has an agent down there, who says he will guarantee my being at the head of the poll. For my own part, I shouldn't much care how the matter ends, only one doesn't like being defeated."

"Well, if you *are* elected, let me know the evening when you intend to make your first speech in the House of Commons, and I will get Sir Charles to procure orders of admission for papa and me."

"It's very kind of you to say that, but I am not going to make any speeches whatever. I told the governor that at the outset, and he says I am not obliged to do so."

"But, as you have been able to draw up so eloquent an address as that you have just spoken of, you can surely manage, with a little practice, to say what you mean when you enter upon your parliamentary duties," rejoined Mary. "I shall have a very poor opinion of your courage, if you don't, at least, make an effort of that kind."

"Do you really mean what you say?" asked Mr. Tom Coomber, elevating his eyebrows and running his fingers through his rather long flaxen hair till it almost stood on end.

"Of course I do," answered Mary, with difficulty restraining an inclination to indulge in a hearty laugh at the ludicrous perplexity expressed in the young man's face.

"Then I must really try to say something in the course of the session, for I value your good opinion more than—I can express just at this moment. Gad! I remember that there's a place in Fetter Lane where I can practice public speaking, and I will go there twice a week till I am able to make a speech."

"Pray don't take all that trouble on my account, but try to learn how to discharge your duties, in order that your constituents may have no cause to complain of you."

Sir Charles, who was waiting to see Florence, having learnt that she was in the conservatory, went out of the room to seek her.

Left alone with Mary, Mr. Tom Coomber, after a minute's interval, drew his chair a little nearer to her and began to turn over the leaves of an album which was lying on the table. The truth was, that he had come to the rectory that day with the full intention of avowing his love; but now that a favourable opportunity of doing so presented itself, he found that it was by no means easy to approach the subject.

"I suppose you have heard that the great City sewer will be completed next year?" he said, at last.

"I was not even aware that it was begun."

"Indeed! Why I thought every one had heard of it. It is said that the governor will get a baronetcy when it's opened, which will be rather a jolly thing for me, as I'm his only son."

"But he is not making the sewer at his own expense, is he?" asked Mary, innocently.

"Oh, come! you don't suppose he's quite such a flat as that!" he said, with a loud laugh.

"Then why is he likely to have a baronetcy conferred upon him when it is opened?"

"It's a kind of compliment to be paid to the corporation, I suppose."

As Mary did not make any rejoinder, Mr. Tom Coomber relapsed into silence, and stared gloomily at his boots for some seconds.

"Have you seen the new song called 'The Dandy Dustman?'" he asked, raising his head suddenly. "It's awfully funny, I assure you. The man I heard sing it at the Grand Pandemonium Hall was called upon to repeat it five times."

"My interest in dustmen, whether dandies or not, is so very slight that I have no desire to hear their deeds celebrated in songs."

"And yet you sing so charmingly yourself," he said in a tone of regret. "I wish I could prevail on you to learn a few comic songs such as I've heard the great Smith sing. However, I suppose there is no hope of that."

"None whatever, Mr. Coomber," she said, laughing.

"Well, I trust that you won't make that reply to what I am now going to say to you."

"I really can't make any promise, as I have no idea to what you allude."

"At any rate, I hope you won't feel offended with me for what I am about to say?"

"If you have any doubt on that point, you had much better leave it unsaid," she replied, coldly.

"No, I can't do that, I've been intending to mention this subject for some months past; but, somehow, I've deferred it from time to time. Even to-day, when I set out from our place, and found it commencing to snow before I had walked half the distance, I felt a good deal inclined to avail myself of that as an excuse for putting off my visit till to-morrow. But I so much dreaded another day's anxiety, that I buttoned up my overcoat, and came on to the rectory, in spite of the weather. And now that I am here, I wish to explain to you the state of my feelings. I love you as much as any fellow in this world ever loved a girl."

"Oh, Mr. Coomber, I am very much grieved to hear you say that," she said, in a low, sweet voice.

"Grieved! Why so?" he inquired, ruffling his hair in the most reckless manner.

"Because I can never regard you as anything more than an acquaintance," she replied, rising.

"Ah, I see how it is, my declaration comes too late, and you have engaged yourself to someone else."

"Late or early, my answer would have been just the same."

"I hope you are quite well, Mr. Coomber?" said Florence, entering from the conservatory,

followed by Sir Charles. "Why, good gracious!" she continued, looking curiously at the young man, "What have you been doing to your hair?"

"It *is* a little out of order, I must admit," he replied, turning to the pier-glass disconsolately.

"Is it the effect of your studying political economy too closely?" inquired Florence, glancing mischievously at her sister.

"I have never studied anything of that kind, and I don't intend to do so."

"Why, Sir Charles has just been telling me that you are going to prepare for a grand oratorical display, in the event of your being elected a member of Parliament, and we all intend to be present on the occasion, if you will only give us a few days' notice."

"I had some intention of trying to make a speech, but I have quite abandoned the idea now," replied Mr. Tom Coomber, sulkily.

"By Jove, I dare say you would be much better at that kind of thing than I," said Sir Charles. "About a couple of years ago, at a dinner of the Agricultural Society, I attempted to make some remarks upon a subject with which I thought myself tolerably well acquainted; but I broke down in the most deplorable style, before I had been speaking for three minutes. Now, there is Wyvern, who was able to deliver the lecture, at the Upfield Schools, last week, without ever appearing at a loss for a word, though he talked for an hour and a quarter."

"Yes," said Mrs. Graves-Parr, who had entered the room a moment previously, "and a most instructive discourse it was."

"Very much so for children of tender years, and those who haven't gone through a course of Mangnall's Questions," remarked Florence, dryly.

Mr. Tom Coomber availed himself of a pause in the conversation which followed to take his leave.

"I have just had a conversation with Lewis who was formerly the gardener at Wilmington House," said Mrs. Graves-Parr, looking furtively at Mary, and I was shocked to hear that Captain Towers is actually going to marry his housekeeper, a dreadfully low person by all accounts."

"I heard a similar report some time ago. There is very probably no truth in it," replied Florence, carelessly.

"Oh! but there is, I assure you, for the ceremony is arranged to take place at Upfield Church, next week."

"Has anyone sent you a valentine?" asked

Florence, noticing that Mrs. Graves-Parr held a large envelope in her hand.

"How can you be so absurd! This letter merely contains some shares that Mr. Bentley Wyvern advised me to purchase, as they are certain to become very valuable. For my children's sake I am, of course, anxious to add as much as possible to the small means which I possess."

"I think that people of limited means should be very careful how they risk their money."

"So I have been in this matter, dear," said Mrs. Graves-Parr. Then, looking spitefully at Florence, she continued, "How much you are to be envied the brilliant match you are about to make. *You* will be placed far beyond the necessity of speculating in shares for the purpose of increasing a very inadequate income. Not that I am discontented with *my* lot; but I cannot help repining when I reflect upon the future of my darling children, whom I have hardly the means to educate."

"Your income is not so small as to make their education a matter of much difficulty, particularly as you have been able to secure a governess for the girls at a salary of ten pounds a year," retorted Florence. "We are extravagant enough at the rectory to pay our cook double that amount, and yet she is by no means satisfied with it."

"I have no reason to suppose that Miss Morley's acquirements would warrant my paying her a larger salary."

"Then she cannot be a competent instructress for three girls, the eldest of whom is nearly fifteen years old," replied Florence, quickly.

"But you forget, dear, that Miss Morley is assisted in her duties by me."

"I am afraid your visiting list is so large that you find it very difficult to devote much time to teaching."

Mrs. Graves-Parr bestowed an angelic smile on Florence as she asked,

"Did you observe the announcement of Mr. Seldon's wedding in the paper this morning?"

"No," replied Florence, abruptly; and then she walked to the piano and began turning over some pieces of music. Mr. Seldon was the lover whom she had jilted about two years previously in consequence of learning that his income was only three hundred a year. As she showed no curiosity to learn whom Mr. Seldon had married, Mrs. Graves-Parr, after briefly mentioning the name of the young lady, considered it judicious to pursue the subject no further in the presence of Sir

Charles, and chose rather to revert to the approaching marriage of Captain Towers, which, she said, was to take place on the following Wednesday.

"Well, I shall not have an opportunity of being present, even if I were so disposed, for by that time Florence and I will have reached Paris," said Sir Charles.

"Happy man!" exclaimed Mrs. Graves-Parr, as she left the room to dress for dinner.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE day following that upon which Fenwick Towers went to Wilmington House he was sitting in Lord Bideford's library, when a servant announced that "a person named Bender" desired an interview. Being admitted, the detective threw a rapid glance round the room, and approached the table at which Fenwick was engaged in writing.

"I called at Northumberland Street this morning, but found you had gone out for the day, Mr. Towers; so, as they told me you would most likely be here, I thought it as well to drop in and see you, in order to save time."

Mr. Bender having said this, placed his hat on the carpet, unbuttoned his overcoat, and took a more deliberate survey of the apartment.

"What is it you wish to say to me?" asked Fenwick, finding that the man was in no great hurry to explain the object of his visit.

"Well, sir, the fact is, I've been thinking over that charge against Fletcher; and it occurs to me, that if you would give me some further particulars respecting him, my chances of getting hold of him would be greater. The captain, in his letter, mentioned about your seeing Fletcher on Wilmington Heath, and your having met him somewhere afterwards. Now, I want to know where that second meeting took place."

"At my residence in Northumberland Street."

"Very good," said Mr. Bender, taking out a small memorandum book, and making an entry. "The next question I have to put is, why did he call upon you?"

"He called upon Mr. Hurlston, a friend of mine, who lodges in the same house with me."

"Oh, then, Mr. Hurlston is acquainted with him?"

"It was from that gentleman that I heard some of the particulars of Fletcher's early life; but they have not met for years until quite recently."

"Do you happen to know whether his visit to Mr. Hurlston was to ask for money?"

Fenwick had not been able to see Mr. Hurlston since he parted with him in the Strand on the previous day, and therefore no opportunity had presented itself of making the old man acquainted with the attack made by Fletcher upon Richard Towers. Under these circumstances, Fenwick, instead of answering the question, proposed that the detective should apply to Mr. Hurlston himself for any further information that might be required.

"P'raps I had better call upon him at once, if you think I'm likely to find him at home?" said Mr. Bender, closing his note-book and putting it in his pocket.

"Defer your visit for a couple of hours, and by that time I shall have had an opportunity of seeing Mr. Hurlston and mentioning the subject to him."

"All right, sir. I'll take care to be there to the minute," said Mr. Bender, looking at his watch. "The captain is getting uncommon impatient, for I got a letter from him this morning complaining of my being so long in finding the man. From what you heard me tell Captain Towers, you'll agree with me that it ain't my fault Fletcher is not yet in custody."

Mr. Bender took up his hat and turned to go.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Why I'm blest if I can see any door to this here room."

Fenwick pointed out the means of exit, hidden by the dummy books.

"Well, I call that ingenious," said Mr. Bender, admiringly. "I suppose," he added after a slight pause, "you haven't any doors of that sort at Wilmington House?"

"There was nothing of that kind when I resided there, and it's very unlikely that there is now."

"Your father must be a bit lonely living in that big house without any family; but p'raps the lady as I saw with him yesterday is a relation of his?"

"No; at present she is the housekeeper," replied Fenwick, somewhat impatiently.

"And a very comfortable place she appears to have got," remarked Mr. Bender, as he left the room.

Fenwick resumed his writing, and added a few more sheets to the manuscript of "The Republics of the World," which was now almost completed. He had brought a chapter to a close, and was putting his papers into a drawer when Lord Bideford and Mr. Erskine Poole entered.

"I suppose you received the letter from Chuffneythorp, which I enclosed to you?" said Fenwick, addressing the attorney. "I had no

hope that it would be of any service to you, but as I had promised Lord Bideford to afford you all the information in my power, I thought it desirable to send it and——"

"You did quite right—quite right, Mr. Towers," interrupted the earl, rather excitedly.

"Although the letter in question merely made reference to the marriage of a person named Pennington, I thought it worth the trouble of sending a clerk down to Devonshire to examine the register at Chuffneythorp," said Mr. Erskine Poole. "His instructions were to telegraph the result to us. He did so this afternoon, but in so very brief a way as to make it doubtful whether any importance is to be attached to what we have learnt. All we know at present is, that there is an entry in the names of Reginald Pennington and Ellen Jane Meredith. Neither the date of the marriage is stated in the telegram nor is any allusion made to the social position or parentage of the persons. It may turn out that the Reginald Pennington mentioned was married within the last twenty years, and is still alive."

"You forget that the book which was missing at the time of my visit was one containing entries made before the commencement of the present century," said Fenwick.

"True, that had escaped my consideration. However, I shall be able to get all the particulars when the clerk returns on Monday. Meantime, I advise Lord Bideford not to be too sanguine respecting the result. As yet, there is no reason to doubt the genuineness of the Doddington entry, while, on the other hand, there is absolutely nothing beyond coincidence of name to lead us to suppose that the marriage at Chuffneythorp has the slightest bearing upon the Bideford case."

"What is your opinion, Mr. Towers," asked the earl, anxiously.

"I agree with Mr. Poole, that the matter is involved in the greatest uncertainty."

"It has been my firm—hum!—conviction for some time, that the entry upon which Sir Charles Pennington depends is a forgery," said the earl, emphatically.

"I hope, for your sake, that it may prove so," said Mr. Erskine Poole, shaking his head doubtfully. "In any case, I fear that it will be a very difficult matter to discover the guilty person. However, if your lordship's suspicions prove to be well founded, I shall cause a rigid inquiry to be made respecting the persons who have had access to the church-register for the last twelve months. Meantime, I must beg Mr. Towers not to allow the topic

we have been discussing to become known to anyone, at least till we can ascertain the particulars of this Chuffneythorp marriage, which, after all, may refer to some butcher or baker of the same name."

Fenwick bowed his acquiescence in Mr. Erskine Poole's request, and soon after left for Northumberland Street. Mr. Bender had just knocked at the door when Fenwick arrived.

"You had better come up to my room, and remain there until I have spoken to Mr. Hurlston," said Fenwick, as they entered.

"You're not likely to keep me waiting very long, I hope? because I've to go a little way into the country, and get back before seven o'clock," said Mr. Bender. "The fact is, I've promised to take my wife and the young 'uns to the theatre; and she has a particular objection to being disappointed when her mind's made up for a night's amusement."

"Sit down, I won't detain you more than a few minutes," replied Fenwick.

Mrs. O'Sullivan, with a bonnet and shawl in her hands, passed the open door of the room at this moment; and Fenwick called her, to inquire whether Mr. Hurlston was at home.

"Sure I don't know, for I've been out since eleven o'clock this morning tryin' to get off payin' the income tax; but I'll go, sur, and see for ye," she said, turning back and descending the stairs.

"Do you know a gen'leman named Bentley Wyvern?" asked Mr. Bender, looking with a critical eye at a coloured drawing of a girl with a head of abnormal size, who was represented feeding a lamb rather bigger than a bullock.

"I had some acquaintance with him a short time ago. Why do you ask that question?"

"Because I happened to see him call here one day. I've heard say that he's a very rich man—this Mr. Wyvern."

"I know nothing whatever of his means, but I should hardly believe that was the case."

"Mr. Hurlston's not out of his bed-room yet," said Mrs. O'Sullivan, putting her head in at the door. "I've just called him, but he didn't give any answer; so, may be, he's asleep."

"He must be ill, or wouldn't remain in bed till this hour," said Fenwick, as he hurried down stairs to Mr. Hurlston's room. The door was locked, and the loudest knocking failed to obtain any reply. Placing his shoulder against the door, Fenwick burst it open and entered.

The old man lay in bed, his eyes were closed, and he seemed to be sleeping tranquilly; but a nearer view showed that it was that long sleep which knows no waking till the end of time. When a surgeon was brought, a few minutes after, he laid his hand upon the pulseless heart and said that Ulysses Hurlston had died painlessly in his sleep.

CYNTHIA.*

WHY do you love to walk abroad so gay,
To rustle in fine silks and rich array,
With borrowed beauties nature's grace to mar,
Nor let your limbs shine glorious as they are?
Cosmetics, perfumes, ornamented hair—
Are these the gifts, think you, to make you fair?
Trust me, my life, you cannot thus gild gold;
Love naked loves not artificial mould.
See with what hues the beauteous earth is crowned,
See, the wild ivy better trails around;
Fairer the arbut in lone grots that grows,
Fairer the water that untutored flows;
The painted shores their native shells up-roll,
And sweeter sing the birds with artless troll.
'Twas not by glossy guise and rich attire
The dames of old did kindle Cupid's fire;
Indebted to no jewels was their face,
Such colour as Apelles' brush could trace;
They did not seek admirers to entice,
And modesty for beauty did suffice.
And yet to them you do not yield the palm:
She charms enough, who can one lover charm.
You Phoebus doth with vocal strains inspire,
To you the muse gives her Aonian lyre.
By pleasant wit, by wisdom, grace, and love,
Which Venus and Minerva both approve,
The idol of my life you still shall be,
When you shall tire of show and vanity.

TABLE TALK.

AMONG the many schemes now set on foot for the improvement of women's education, there is one which is, as yet, generally known to the public—and when known, it can hardly fail to be sought after and appreciated. This is the Cambridge Local Examination for women above eighteen years of age—held annually. These examinations were instituted last year, in consideration of a memorial presented to the Senate of the university in 1868, signed by more than 700 ladies, and praying for an examination which should act as a stimulus to the higher education of women, and give to professional teachers the opportunity of testing their proficiency and of

obtaining a certificate to which the authority of the university is attached. Many people are familiar with the Cambridge Local Examinations for boys and girls, value the advantages they offer, and have seen with satisfaction that the university of Oxford has this year admitted girls to its local examinations. The success of these junior examinations was the strongest argument for establishing a higher standard of knowledge. The first examination for women was held last year in London and Leeds; 36 candidates entered, of whom 25 passed, and the Syndicate of Cambridge, in their Report, express themselves well satisfied with the results, considering the short notice that was unavoidably given of their first examination. The second examination will be held this year, beginning July 4th, in Leeds, London, and Rugby, and possibly in other towns also. The subjects for examination are divided into groups. Group A.—the first—includes religious knowledge, English history, literature, composition, and arithmetic; and this group, with the exception of religious knowledge, is compulsory. The other groups offer a large choice of subjects, and are optional.

NO ONE will envy the task which two French surgeons lately set themselves of experimenting upon the severed head of a guillotined criminal, in order to test the truth of certain stories, lately revived, about dismembered faces showing signs of life. Yet it was well the work should be done, and the results obtained are valuable, as confirming former opinions upon the entire untruthfulness of the reported manifestations. The head examined was received from the executioner within five minutes of its severation, and the tests for symptoms of sensation were made immediately. The face was bloodless, the features were rigid, eyes open, mouth gaping, and the expression was one of stupor, *not of pain*. To ascertain if sense existed, the ear was cleansed and the name of the criminal was shouted into it; but no feature moved. Next ammonia was placed under the nose: there was no contraction of the nasal muscles. Then a candle was held close to the eyes; but neither this nor subsequent cauterizations by nitrate of silver caused the pupil to alter its condition. Evidently the brain was not susceptible of receiving and conveying impressions. All was dead. Electricity was applied, and it moved the facial muscles; but only on the side subjected to it, and it was quite evident that the brain had no connection with these actions; for afterwards the skull was sawn through and

* Translated from Propertius, i., Eleg. ii.

the brain removed, and yet the galvanic current excited the muscles to motion as before. The experimenters assert that the brain becomes insensible at the instant of execution, in consequence of the sudden arrest of circulation and the resulting syncope.

MR. L'ESTRANGE'S lately-published "Life" ("Letters" would be more appropriate) "of Mary Russell Mitford" is a truly healthy and delightful work; and nowhere is the vigorous, guileless mind of Miss Mitford more freely shown than in her frank but rapturous talk—so different from sickly "gushing"—about her favourite dogs. In one of her very characteristic letters, descriptive of the excellencies of "Mossy," otherwise "Mosstrooper," her favourite greyhound, she says of his death, "Everybody loved him—'dear saint,' as I used to call him, and as I do not doubt he now is! . . . My own beloved Mossy, heaven bless you!" Here is terrible heterodoxy!—a dog, and yet a saint! We hear of a "love of a dog," and even of a "duck of a dog," but here is a saint of a dog! Miss Mitford's raptures—which we can thoroughly understand and excuse—even surpass the Indian creed about the immortality of dogs. That creed admitted the beloved dog to equal company with his master, in their paradise. The passage in Pope's "Essay on Man" (Epistle i., lines 99—112) will be familiar to most readers: it begins with

Lo! the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind,
and ends with

But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

A less-known illustration of this belief will be found in the Oxford prize poem for 1829, "A Voyage of Discovery to the Polar Regions," written by that "T. Legh Claughton, Trinity College," who is now the Bishop of Rochester, and was, for some years, Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford. His lines on this subject are as follows:—

Amid tempestuous seas and fields of ice,
His creed has placed a lowlier Paradise;
There, swarthy hunters mount their cars again,
Lash their lean dogs, and scour along the plain.

Others, besides Indians, have held "the Indian creed" concerning the resurrection of dogs and other animals; and, for some remarks on the word "creation," in the passage, Romans, viii., 18—23, as involving "the doctrine of a resurrection of the brute creation,"

the reader may do well to consult the preface to "Records of Animal Sagacity and Character," by the Rev. F. O. Morris.

IT MIGHT BE SAID that a professed reader should adopt Read's version. Yet, Mr. Bellew's interpretation of "matin," in the line of the Ghost's address to Hamlet,

The glow-worm shows the matin to be near

(in which he has followed Read's rendering), has made a mighty pother among his critics. And, justly so. Mr. Bellew has introduced the scenic exterior of a chapel, with the audible performance of the "matins" in its supposed interior; and has further supposed that, when Hamlet said that he would "go pray," he was about to attend matins. It may be noted that it is the one only time that Shakspeare uses the word "matin;" and the probability is that he so used it simply as a synonym for "morning-dawn." Similarly, Tennyson speaks of "the wild skylark's matin-song" and "the first matin-song;" and Scott uses the expression, "the early matins of the lark," which is an idea in harmony with the familiar epithet, "the choir of birds." By the way, the *Record* has been recently finding fault with the revisers of the Church "Lectionary," that they have given the name of "Matins" to the Morning Prayers. It is to be observed, however, that, in doing so, the revisers simply retained the word that is to be found in the Prayer Book, at the heading of the Table of Proper Lessons; and, it is the only place in the Prayer Book in which it is to be found. Shakspeare and the compilers of the Church Liturgy were alike in this; they only once used the word. In the Prayer Book it is spelled with a double t, "Mattins."

PARIS TAKES KINDLY TO HORSE-FLESH. If the consumption goes on increasing at its recent rate, there will, in a few years, be no room for beef in the markets. The Minister of Agriculture has had a report presented to him by the committee for encouraging hippophagy, and it contains some figures that will startle epicures who regard the practice as an abomination. It was on the 9th of July, 1866, that the first horse-flesh mart was opened; and from that day till the end of the year 902 steeds were cut up and sold to set forth the Paris dining-tables. This would be at the rate of 1800 a-year. In 1867 the whole number of actual victims was 2152, showing an increase of about 300. Again, in 1868, there was a nearly equal increase: for, in that year, the

number rose to 2421. The last year's tale is not included. Three hundred head of "cattle" is a good round number to be added to each previous year's consumption; and it is a proof that, knowingly or not, the Parisians are habituating themselves to dine off that delicacy which was so relished by one of them, who, while on a visit to London, daily purchased his *viande* from a barrow-trundling coster, at the rate of "dree morceaux, on a leetle steck, for un pennie." Every horse carcase yields about 200 kilogrammes of meat, or about 450 pounds: so that, in 1868, there were about a million pounds of the flesh eaten. This is only for Paris; the committee have not yet secured data for the whole of France; but they think that in 1868 the amount may be stated at two million kilogrammes. They are proud of their progress, and well they may be; but who envies them?

THE NIMBLE FINGER and the dexterous hand have hitherto been held the only tools to wrap and shape tobacco leaves into the orthodox form of the cigar. But just as it was found that fingers were not the most economical manipulators of the sewing needle, so is it now dawning upon the fabricators of choice Havannahs that human digits may be profitably superseded by mechanism for "bunching," "binding," and "wrapping" the cigars. Eighteen dollars a thousand is a long price to pay for mere labour; and we are told that that is about the cost of making prime cigars, to say nothing of the tax upon the master manufacturer inflicted by his hands, who each smoke some eight or ten of the best weeds *per diem*. No wonder machinery should be thought of! It is rather surprising its aid was not invoked long ago; but its time has come, and a cigar machine company has started with a flourish in New York. The implement they manufacture has been reduced to its present state of compactness and practicability by the combined agency of seven simplifying patents. Its essential parts are two pairs of parallel rollers, ranged one pair over the other, and with their surfaces hollowed to a concavity corresponding to the desired outline of the cigar to be formed. These rollers are set rotating by a little wheelwork, driven by a treadle, like a sewing machine; and when a bunch of tobacco leaf is placed between them it is rapidly turned and pressed into the proper spindle form. A strip of fine strong leaf is then gummed along one edge and inserted at one end of the machine; this is instantly coiled round the shaped mass of leaves and

twisted to a point, and the cigar is finished. A girl, after proper training, can thus turn out fifteen hundred cigars a day. According to the above quoted cost for hand making, there ought to be a saving of something like three shillings on a hundred. This is good news for smokers, at all events.

THE CHARGES LEVIED by the vergers of St. Paul's Cathedral upon visitors have so often been the subject of complaint, that we had hoped that, under a new Dean, some alteration and reduction in the amount of this blackmail might take place: but we are disappointed. In a letter to the *Times* on the subject, Dean Mansel "begs leave to state, in answer to Mr. V——'s letter, that the authorised charges for visiting those parts of the Cathedral for which fees are paid are as follows, for each person:—Galleries 6d.; library, bell, &c., 6d.; crypt, 6d.; ball, 1s. 6d.; clock, 2d.: total, 3s. 2d." "This," the Dean's correspondent remarks, "is much in excess of any payment I have made for being conducted over Westminster, York, or any Cathedral;" where, we may add, they have much more that is worth seeing to show to strangers. St. Paul's is peculiarly national property: a national subscription has been set on foot for its appropriate internal decoration; it is a central point of interest with strangers who visit London, few of whom leave the metropolis, after their first visit, without having seen the objects of interest within its walls: and we shall only express the public opinion when we say, that the fees charged by the attendants, with, it appears, the full assent of the Chapter, are at least half as much again as they ought to be. It is admitted on all sides that St. Paul's ought to be regarded as the national Cathedral: it is the duty of the Chapter to foster a national interest in all that appertains to it; and over and over again it has been stated, that a shilling or eighteenpence is the maximum amount that should be allowed by the authorities to be charged for seeing every object of curiosity or interest from the Cross to the Crypt. Of this state of opinion Dean Mansel is the last person who should be ignorant.

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ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

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Price 2d.

THE MORTIMERS :

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK II.—CHAPTER III.

AFTER THE RACE.

ERLE



AFTER his success in leading his crew to victory, was congratulated by all his friends, and by no one of them more warmly than by Mr. Campbell. Although quite an enthusiast for all athletic sports, and especially devoted to row-

ing, it was with a feeling of relief that he found himself, at the end of the races, able to go out of training, and resume his ordinary mode of life. Some four weeks of very severe exercise and unpleasant diet, consisting chiefly of beefsteaks and mutton chops imperfectly cooked, with almost all vegetables and sweets forbidden, and one's pipe laid under an interdict, may always be looked back upon with greater pleasure than it can be looked forward to as a coming event.

Directly the last day's racing was over,

our hero and his crew rushed wildly upon the delicacies forbidden during the past few weeks, began to smoke at an alarming rate, and otherwise to disport themselves as men who, having been in bondage, were now free.

To head the river is a distinction eagerly striven for by the leading boats in the first division. And at Tudor, the sudden disabling of their tried and trusted "stroke," Courtenay, was regarded with very blank looks. Reginald's success was, in consequence, received with the greater demonstrations of delight on all sides, and gained for him great temporary popularity in the college. His habits had been retiring from the day of his first entrance upon a university career, and he was intimately known to but few of the men of his own year, and among those of the years above and below him he could scarcely count even a single nodding acquaintance.

His education by a private tutor, after leaving the Dominie's, had contributed to make him somewhat shy and solitary in his mode of life. Probably it would have been better for him, tending much to his after happiness, had Dr. Gasc thought fit to send him to some great public school; but he was otherwise advised, and chose the Reverend Samuel Walker's care for him instead. A stranger to everybody about him, alone, without acquaintance or friend, Reginald was for some time at Cambridge before he moved easily among the men about him.

With no old school friends, in whose society recollections of the life of a public school would have formed a common bond of association, it was not to be wondered at that he led rather a hermit's life during his first year at the university. He had, too, a morbid fear of being questioned about his family and parentage, which acted as a check upon his going much into the society of his fellow-students. Under these circumstances, he naturally devoted much of his time to study during that first year at Tudor,

and at the end of it obtained a high place in the college examination list, and was rewarded by a foundation scholarship of eighty pounds per annum. Mr. Campbell's lectures he attended, some two or three times a week; and between the teacher and his pupil a close friendship was gradually formed. They walked together along the gravel paths to all the country villages round Cambridge. They had long talks and friendly arguments together over their tea in their college rooms. To Campbell at length Erle unbosomed all his doubts and fears, telling his friend all he knew of his own antecedents, so different from those of the men about him. And from Campbell he received the warmest sympathy, and the best consolation and advice the worthy Scotchman could offer him.

By Campbell he was urged to associate with his college acquaintances, and to try to overcome his feelings of shyness and aversion to society. And it was at the advice of the same friend that he, in his third term, took his place in one of the college boats, and, with careful training, soon made a most respectable figure among the crew, at last becoming, as we have seen, "stroke" of the boat, and one of the best oars at Tudor.

More than once the good Doctor visited him at Cambridge, and highly delighted he was with the place and with Reginald's success. He made friends with Mr. Campbell at once, and long talks about the Doctor's early experiences in Edinburgh they had together.

At the time of the race, in which Erle had rowed with such plucky determination, he was within a few months of his final examination; and, in the opinion of Mr. Campbell, stood a good chance of doing well enough in the schools to get his fellowship. All this news was of course sent to his good friends in Bartholomew-square, and delighted them very much; also reaching the ears of Mr. Strongi'th'arm, when he called to see Dr. Gasc.

"Ah, Doctor," the Dominie would say with a sigh, "that was the best boy I ever had. He never ought to have left me. Mrs. Strongi'th'arm says so too. But I've the satisfaction of knowing I was the making of him. I laid the foundation, you know."

And to this, to please the Dominie, Dr. Gasc would readily give his assent.

Now, a few days after the races, a meeting was held every May term for the election of officers. And for the post of First Captain Erle was requested to stand. The other candidate brought forward was Charles Mortimer, who, on the strength of occasionally acting as coxswain, considered himself a boating man, and had no objection to having the honours of the club conferred upon him in the place of Courtenay, who, though now recovered from his accident, retired at the end of his term of office according to custom.

At first Erle declined to be made a candidate, but, yielding to the solicitations of his friends, at last consented to let his name go to the meeting. Accordingly, he was proposed and seconded in due form. The partizans of Mortimer, however, were very sanguine of success, and did not hesitate to declare their opinion of what the result would be.

When the eventful evening arrived—the boat supper was held after the election—Mortimer, who had an engagement at some theatrical rehearsal, did not even think it necessary to be present at the meeting, so well assured were his party of success.

The president occupied the chair, the room was crowded with the members of the club, the usual formal business was gone through, and when the ballot-box was examined, and the little slips of paper added, it was found that Erle was elected by a majority of some ten or a dozen votes, much to the surprise and chagrin of the Mortimer party.

Erle was congratulated on the result by his friends, and returned thanks in the neat speech usual on such occasions.

The remaining elections were made, prior to the whole party breaking up and adjourning to "metal more attractive," namely, to the supper provided for the club on the opposite side of the quadrangle.

CHAPTER IV.

A BOAT SUPPER.

THE election of a gentleman to fill the important office of First Captain of the Tudor College Boat Club was, as was before observed, annually followed by an entertainment of a very liberal character, at which nearly all the members of the T. C. B. C. were wont to be present. This "spread," as these gentlemen would

call it, was given in the rooms of the retiring First Captain, and was provided out of the funds of the club. Courtenay, the late "stroke" of the first Tudor boat, whose accident at the eleventh hour caused Reginald Erle to be substituted for him in the last night's race, was the retiring Captain. And on the evening in question, his rooms in the Old Quadrangle of Tudor College were the scene of the noisy and boisterous merriment with which, at the end of every term, the members of the club brought their labours to a happy termination.

Mr. Courtenay's rooms were just such a set as any man of taste would set his heart on. They had formerly been what Mrs. Leech the bedmaker termed, when describing their manifold resources to a new tenant, "feller's rooms;" but, being surrounded by the habitations of noisy undergraduates, they had fallen from their high estate, and had been, for some college generations, in the occupation of favoured juniors.

Fine old oak panelling, nearly black with age, covered the walls from the floor to the ceiling, and over the fireplace these panels were enriched with grotesque carvings. The high windows, with little leaded lozenge-shaped panes, looked into the spacious square, commanding a view of the four towers and crumbling images of the old gateway, the chapel, hall, and Master's lodge. One of these windows was embayed, and the old-fashioned seat that ran round it formed a capacious wine-bin, as well as an agreeable lounge for the occupant or his friends. The decorations on the walls consisted of a few well-known prints after Landseer and other favourite painters, supplemented by the true and faithful likenesses of certain celebrated racehorses and actresses known to fame. On the present occasion, the flags of the club and a splendid trophy of skulls and other boating paraphernalia, arranged by Mr. Courtenay's gyps to add an appropriate splendour to the entertainment, were affixed to the walls. On the table a substantial repast was laid out; the candles and lamps were lighted; and the large tankards and cups, the property of the club or sent in from the butteries, filled with champagne, claret, and cider cup, or with the renowned "Tudor mixture," gave a handsome appearance to the board.

The meeting for the election of new officers for the ensuing term on the opposite side of the quadrangle having ended,

directly it was over the members of the club came trooping across the smoothly shaven grass plots to the supper-room. Our friend Mr. Childers, who was always a leader of the vanguard on any festive occasion, was among the first arrivals at Courtenay's rooms. He was accompanied by one Marsden, the "cox" of the first boat. This gentleman was of a humorous nature, and remarkable in the college for his imitations of domestic and farmyard animals, from the roar of the stately bull to the unmelodious crow of the Cochin-China cock. Mr. Marsden's distinctive feature was his nose, which was of an exaggerated Roman type; and his chief accomplishment—always excepting the imitations above-mentioned—was his sneeze. His nasal organ having commonly an angry and inflamed appearance, made him seem at all times in a state of chronic catarrh. Being, however, the lucky possessor of a very sound constitution, notwithstanding these symptoms of disorder, he turned his sneezes to good account; for, when "hauled" by the Deans or lecturers for crimes both of omission and commission, he gave a few pitiful sneezes, which were final and conclusive in their power of transferring their perpetrator *bonâ fide* and without a doubt in the tutorial mind to the list of the truly "*ager*."

"Do take care of yourself, Mr. Marsden," said the Reverend William Bubb, the senior lecturer at Tudor, "or we shall have you confined to your bed. I am quite convinced that with such a cold as that you ought never to be out in the night air."

And although receiving this kind warning of the danger he ran, that very morning, and promising to be very careful indeed for the future, Mr. Marsden ventured to the supper and played no secondary part thereat, either with his knife and fork or with his stentorian voice in the numerous choruses that followed later in the evening.

Immediately after the arrival of Mr. Childers and the "cox," the guests poured in rapidly; and a number of wooden boxes, containing dishes with tin covers, having by this time made their appearance from the kitchens, the signal for the attack was given by Mr. Courtenay, who took the chair.

Pitching their caps and gowns into the corners of the room, the members of the T. C. B. C. at once seated themselves at the table, and proceeded vigorously with

the work of disposing of the substantial fare provided by the cooks.

There were present tall gentlemen and short gentlemen, gentlemen stout and thin, quiet and noisy, with a predominance of the latter—in numbers I mean, for of course they were predominant in other respects. Supper having at length been satisfactorily got through, several loyal and patriotic toasts were given, in accordance with the usage of the club on such occasions. Then the healths of the various officers of the club were severally proposed and drunk in bumpers, with the accompaniment of musical honours: “For he’s a jolly good fel-low” ringing out in noisy chorus through the quad, to the annoyance of reading men and the horror of the Dons, who, respecting the occasion, did not venture to interfere.

What conversation there was in the intervals between the toasts and songs was entirely upon matters aquatic. About boating everybody can talk, and at Tudor nearly everybody does: from the Fellows’ feast to the undergraduates’ “wine” it is ever a safe subject of discourse, and one in which all take an interest which few other topics can command: indeed, what would be talked about if boating were not, on these occasions, has been a puzzle to many wise and learned heads. Considerable attention was, as a matter of course, paid to the discussion of the race in which Reginald Erle and his crew were successful in placing the Tudor boat at the head of the river.

When the health of our hero, the new captain of the club, was proposed, it was drunk by the assembled party with generous enthusiasm and “three times three.” It was a proud moment for Erle when he stood on his legs to thank his friends for the honour they had done him, the confidence they—so undeserved on his part—were pleased to place in him, and so forth. For on such occasions the honoured practice is to under-rate our own conspicuous merits, and to be altogether taken by surprise at the distinction conferred on us. To be sure, our hero’s speech was not original, for had he not often heard new officers and old returning thanks in the stereotyped phrases in everyday use? But it was short, and to the purpose, long-windedness being odious in the ears of all.

With the manly cheers of his friends and associates ringing in his ears as he sat down again after his speech was made, heartily

thankful that the task was over; he wished the good Doctor and Madam could have heard them, knowing they would have rejoiced greatly thereat.

One party only was dissatisfied, and took but slight share in the proceedings of the evening. These were the men who, being immediate partizans of Mortimer, had left no stone unturned to secure his election to the post of honour Erle had won by his exertions for the good of the club of which both were leading members. They were of the kid-gloved school, who, without sharing the toil of the day, would willingly enough receive more than their fair share of the glory. They were led by Mr. Childers, who, though no rowing man himself, was the secretary to the club. They had seated themselves together, and, though greatly in the minority, made among them a rather formidable clique, whose disaffection was calculated to cast a slight damp upon the general harmony. They had all, with one accord, deplored the absence of Mortimer from the previous meeting, and now lamented that he was not present at the supper.

However, their gloom on this score was speedily dissipated by the arrival of their candidate, who had learned the result of the election on his way through the town, having met some men of his acquaintance. These gentlemen of course instantly apprised him of his defeat. He determined, on his way to college, to put in an appearance at the supper, and to assume as indifferent and careless an air as was possible under the circumstances of his severe disappointment. Accordingly, giving a loud knock at the door, he burst into Courtenay’s room, and was received with a loud cheer by his immediate party, which was joined in by the whole room. Tossing his gown aside, he seated himself at once, and joined in the fun and the choruses in his liveliest manner.

“Ah!” he exclaimed, as the servants brought in some huge steaming bowls of punch; “milk punch. My favourite wittles. I declare I am quite hoarse with spouting at that theatrical affair.”

Except that his friends were themselves, to use an inoffensive term, a “trifle jolly,” they might have noticed that his gaiety did not proceed entirely from the natural excitement of taking part in a convivial meeting. As it was, however, his slight inebriation passed unobserved by most men at the table. Opposite him was placed one of the

fragrant bowls—an old china bowl of antique and curious design. Mandarins and fabled monsters, round its sides, vied with each other in surpassing ugliness; while sky-blue griffins and red sharks floated apparently, round the edges, Tantalus-like approaching with their mouths a fluid they could never taste and slices of lemon they could never grasp.

"Now, who'll have some of this?" said Mortimer, seizing the ladle, whose handle bore in silver effigy the head and shaven crown of some old friar, and filling some half-dozen glasses round the bowl with the innocent-looking liquor, just mellowed in tone by the added spirit.

Then his own health was drunk, with a little badinage about being defeated but not disgraced; and he responded to it, though his utterance was somewhat thick, in a like spirit of banter, but with perfect good temper.

"How did you get in here last night, Mortimer?" demanded Childers. "I asked the porter myself."

"So did I, Mortimer," Marsden remarked.

Mortimer smiled, but made no reply to their query.

"Not through the gate, we know," observed Childers.

"Climbing again, I suppose," suggested an athletic gentleman, with a very red moustache.

"What's all that, Mort?" asked a friend opposite.

"Oh, only my old dodge, you know," replied Mortimer, laughing, "of finding myself in college when I feel dull in lodgings, and want to join my friends without putting Jenkins to the trouble of opening the gate."

"You know he would not," cried several voices.

"Or if he did, he would shut it again—sharp," observed Mr. Childers, in a feeling manner.

"Well, you see," Mortimer continued, "I don't like to disturb the beggar at such improper hours. The man must have his rest, you know, like every other fellow."

"How does he manage it?" asked a friend, who sat near him.

"Perhaps Mortimer will kindly enlighten you," said Mr. Childers, who was himself in the secret.

"Certainly," replied Mortimer; "it is ever a pleasure to diffuse useful information;

and, as I shall not be with you much longer, I will take the present opportunity."

"He-ar, he-ar," said several of his listeners.

"Well," he continued, "I will ask you to suppose the case of an individual—who shall be nameless—finding himself dull in his lodgings, and anxious to get within his college walls at an hour which I will not shock your nerves by even hinting, and knowing the gate porter to be inexorable, to discover that, by climbing the side of a certain bridge, and stepping cautiously along a ledge overhanging the river, he can open the window of a certain gentleman—"

"Erle's," said Childers, in a low voice, interrupting Mortimer.

"Suppose, also," he went on, "the first nameless individual to be a pretty fair climber; and will it require any great stretch of imagination to suppose that that gentleman frequently and successfully carried out his ingenious scheme?"

This sportive sally was received with considerable applause by the gentlemen at Mortimer's end of the room.

"I see that my friend Mortimer is making you all laugh," said Courtenay, from the top of the table. "I am sure you will second me when I ask him to amuse us all. I call upon Mr. Mortimer for a song."

After the customary moment or two of bashful hesitation—indulged in by all gentlemen under similar circumstances—Mr. Charles Mortimer, who had a very pleasing tenor voice, favoured the company with a song—a short time ago highly popular in the university—with the first verse and chorus of which, doubtless, our readers will be quite satisfied. Having risen from his seat, and cleared his throat with a prefatory hem, Charles Mortimer began—

"Now of Cambridge I will sing,
Where all England's future King
Came to get some le-ar-ning,
As an undergrad of Cambridge."

"Chorus, gentlemen!" exclaimed Mr. Childers, with an air of importance. And their manly voices chorused forth the refrain—

"Where all the money goes!
What it's spent in goodness knows—
Brandy, wine, and *quelque chose*,
In this town of Cambridge!"

until the old quadrangle echoed again.

Mortimer's song was received with very loud applause. The call being with him, he requested Mr. Childers to favour them. That gentleman having complied, Mr. Marsden followed in his turn; and so on, until every gentleman present who had a song to sing had sung it, and a great many, who had no notion they knew a song before they went to the supper, were surprised to find themselves endowed with vocal powers for the nonce, and roaring away in the most boisterous fashion. And for such gentlemen as could not be prevailed upon to undertake a song all by themselves, there were several Dutch choruses in which everybody could join, and sing his own song to his own tune, and in his own time, without disturbing anybody else. The fun now became fast and furious; and as the night wore on, each new chorus was noisier than the last. There were few men left in the room who had not already overstepped the fine line which separates soberness from ebriety. As the great clock in the old turret struck the midnight hour, its strokes sounded plainly through the open windows of Courtenay's room."

"By Jove!" cried Childers, "twelve o'clock! we shall have the tutor sending up if we make such a row."

"Never mind; let us have 'Yap, yap,' to fetch him out," said another.

"Ah!" exclaimed a third, "that will wake the old boy up if he's gone to by-bye, if anything will."

"Come, gentlemen," said Mr. Jack Childers, somewhat unsteady on his legs, "'Yap, yap, yap,' and wake your amiable tutor. Mortimer will oblige us with solo partsh I'msure."

Mr. Childers's proposal was instantly carried by acclamation. Charles Mortimer, in compliance therewith, stood up, and, accompanied by a gentle rocking motion, suggesting that the ground under his feet was not perfectly level, sang with a rather uncertain voice—

"The summer days are gone,
The autumn nights are closing;
We students are so gay,
Our ladies always toasting.
Toujours, toujours,
Bacchus et les Amours."

At this juncture, Mr. Jack Childers, acting in the capacity of amateur toast-master, stood up and gave the time for the chorus with his hand, at the same time taking

the lead at the very top of his powerful lungs—

"Yap! Yap! Yap!
Tra la la la la! Tra la la la la!
Yap! Yap! Yap!
Tra la la la.
Bacchus et les Amours."

And verse after verse of Mortimer's song was followed by an overpowering chorus, until just before the end was arrived at, there was a respectful tap at the door, and one of the porters came with "the tutor's compliments to Mr. Courtenay, and there must be no more noise at that late hour, or the party would be dispersed" by that dignitary in person.

The messenger was received with a derisive shout, and a shower of missiles of all sorts, from "mortar boards" to nutshells, from which he beat a hasty retreat, closing the door behind him, and getting down the stairs as fast as he could.

Erle, and one or two others of the sober men, thought that this was a very good opportunity for taking their departure, being heartily tired of the noise, and of their company.

"Are you coming, Erle?" asked one, making a futile effort to pick out his own cap and gown from the pile in the corner of the room near him.

"Yes," he replied; "I am ready to be off at any moment, now."

But the three or four who rose to leave were literally dragged back into their seats by others of the party; and Courtenay, who was himself sober enough, begged them to stay.

"You can't go, at all events, Mr. First Captain," he said, addressing Erle. "You must stay it out."

"I would very much rather go, thank you," returned Reginald, laughing.

"Oh, stay—stay with me, all of you; it won't last very much longer."

Reluctantly Erle was persuaded to remain.

"It may be our unpleasant duty to see some of them safely to bed," urged their host.

In the course of the evening there had been considerable changing of seats, and Mortimer's little clique had gradually mingled with the rest, instead of as at first sitting with one end of the table to themselves; and Mortimer himself now occupied a seat very near to the place where Erle sat.

The reply of the noisy party to the tutor's

message was soon given. Mortimer's song was encored; and, if possible, more loudly than before the chorus rang out on the night air, reverberating through the old archways and cloisters of the great quadrangle—

"Yap! Yap! Yap!
Tra la la la la!
Toujours, toujours,
Bacchus et les A-m-o-u-r-s."

Immediately at the conclusion of the second verse the door was opened gently by the same servant who appeared before. He just put his head into the room this time, taking care to screen himself with the door.

"If that noise is repeated, gentlemen, the tutor will come himself and see you all to your own rooms."

The message was received with a roar of laughter, and cries of "Let the old boy come, that's all!"

Courtenay remonstrated, but his guests were for the most part past being reasoned with.

The clock in the old turret struck one. The candles were guttering in the candlesticks; the lamps were becoming dim; but the bright moonlight streamed in through the windows, from which the curtains were drawn back to let in the fresh air.

Mr. Childers and some of his friends playfully pelted each other with nutshells and other fragmentary remains still left on the cloth.

Mortimer, whose assumed good temper had given place to a sullen fit, sat with his head buried in his hands, seemingly asleep. This appeared to his friend Childers something quite improper and out of place. Accordingly, with a too well-aimed piece of cork, as an exquisite bit of fun, he struck Mortimer a sharp stroke on the forehead.

Stung by the sudden and unexpected blow, he sprang up, pale with rage.

A glass of the milk-punch stood before him. He seized it, and instantly dashed the contents of the glass in the direction whence the missile had come.

Some went over Childers, a portion struck Erle, the rest fell on the floor behind them.

Mortimer folded his arms, and looked defiantly around him. Childers laughed at the episode. Erle sat expecting some apology.

"Oh, Mortimer!" exclaimed Courtenay, "look! what have you done?"

The young man, who was in a violent passion, made no answer.

"See, you have dashed the punch over Erle," Courtenay continued. "Childers threw the piece of cork."

"Yes-sh, I did," said Childers.

"You will apologise, of course, Mortimer?" said Courtenay, calmly.

But Mortimer, turning away his head, sat silent.

"Oh, yes, of course—an apology," said several of the bystanders.

Erle muttered something to the effect that it was not necessary then, and rose to leave the table.

"Don't go for a minute, Erle," urged Courtenay. "You must apologise, Mortimer. Come," he added, presuming upon Mortimer's condition, "we insist upon it."

"I don't know that Erle did not insult me first," he replied, angrily—"inshulme-first," the young gentleman said—"by throwing the cork at me."

"You have been told who threw it," said Courtenay, warmly.

"I threw it," Childers interposed. The dispute was making him sober.

"It is quite immaterial to me who threw it."

"Don't say that, Mortimer," said Courtenay, waxing very wroth. "Don't say that; but offer an apology in a gentlemanlike way."

"As he would if he were sober," remarked one of the witnesses of the scene.

Mortimer heard this remark, and became mad with rage.

"I am sober, sir," he said, quickly. Then added, with greater deliberation, "But, sober or not, I only apologise to *gentlemen*"—laying a marked stress upon the word—"not to a nameless —."

A sibilant word fell from the speaker's lips.

"Shameful!" cried his hearers.

Erle was insulted beyond the hope of reparation.

The avalanche had fallen. In the moment of his pride he was stricken down. Crushed—blinded for the instant by the force of the blow—he covered his eyes with his hands. His face became first very white, then flushed of a deep red. The moment he recovered from the first shock, acting on impulse, he strode across the room, with upraised arm, to strike down the assailant of his fame.

But at that moment the footsteps of several persons were heard on the staircase outside.

OUR SOLDIERS.

BY A PRIVATE IN THE RANKS.

[THE writer of these few notes on the dress and character of the British Soldier, which appear at a time when the discipline and organization of the Army are attracting such general attention, respectfully dedicates them to Mr. Cardwell, and Army reformers in general.]

EVEN outsiders will have observed that, since the termination of the Crimean war, not a year has passed without some change being made in the dress and equipment of the army; and yet our soldiers are almost suffocated by tight tunics, and the free action of the organs of respiration retarded by the pressure of heavy pouches and belts upon the chest. Our old-school martinets regard as a primary matter the military appearance of their battalions on parade, not caring a straw about what inconvenience and pain may, in consequence, be occasioned to the men. They would not have their hobbies upset for the world; and not only their own hobbies are frequently to be satisfied, but those of their wives and friends as well. More than one captain's and colonel's wife has exercised authority on the quarter-deck and the parade. I knew a general at Portsmouth who gave an order that at all parades—he commanding—the soldiers of the garrison should wear packs; because his daughter, a young lady of sixteen, admired them in marching past. "O, papa, make them march past again; the knapsacks look so nice in rotation when wheeling. Do, there's a dear, make them go again." And the poor men had to go again and again, for perhaps a dozen times, till many fell out of the ranks from sheer exhaustion.

The Portsmouth readers of this magazine, on perusing these notes, will no doubt recall the affair to memory with a smile, as the circumstance was much talked of and many witticisms made upon it.

Certainly, the knapsacks looked well—the white great-coat straps contrasting with the black frame of the packs; but that was no reason why men's health should be perilled by the continual wear of them. Indeed, it is said, on authority, that more men have been lost by over-marching in tight clothing and heavy equipment than in the heaviest campaign upon record; for pleurisy and

heart disease usually attend or follow excessive fatigue.

It is great nonsense to make soldiers wear the same clothing in summer as in winter, for every period of transition fills our hospitals with cases of severe cold and bronchitis—frequently consumption—which end in death. In the guards' hospitals alone, last winter, the wards were crammed with such cases, which called forth remarks from military authorities, and engaged the serious attention of the officers themselves. I myself, a private in the guards, suffered on several occasions, and was obliged to go to hospital for medical treatment.

In the summer season I often was compelled to support myself on my rifle owing to the heat and exhaustion caused by a tight tunic buttoned up to the throat, with a thick leather stock buckled round the neck, a tremendous bearskin head-dress fastened round the chin by a heavy brass chain, twenty rounds of ball ammunition suspended from the chest by a large belt, and a heavy knapsack, the straps of which contracted the organs of respiration and retarded the free action of the muscles. A soldier is obliged to walk about, the sun's rays descending vertically upon him, with perspiration often oozing through his scarlet coat and buff-leather belts.

Again, on field-days, the troops are manœuvred about in "double quick" time for hours, till they are in a foam of sweat, and afterwards marched to their barracks, where they remove their outer clothing, and, being exposed to draughts, catch fatal colds. The regiments of the line, lately, have been provided with a loose jacket or paletôt to wear in hot weather, which has proved already highly beneficial, and has reduced the rate of mortality; but in the guards—who are supposed to show the example to all other corps—no such change or improvement has been made. We are obliged to walk out on Sundays wearing those large, ugly hats; and I don't know what on earth is the reason—surely, not for their beauty, for they make us look like gorillas, and frighten children who are not used to seeing them.

Soldiers are generally men of robust constitutions and perfect physical development; yet it is a very common thing to see many fainting and borne to the rear on field-days, in a state of complete exhaustion.

A celebrated general, when asked how he

would fight a certain battle if he had again to contest the field, answered—"In his shirt-sleeves;" and the remark was most sensible. The British troops in Africa, when fighting against the Kaffirs, met with great reverses, owing to their inability to compete with the great activity and fleetness of the enemy. Nothing but disaster could ensue from the nonsense of sending men fully accoutred to fight against naked savages, whose spears possessed deadly aim, from behind trees, and hidden from view by thickets. General Stonewall Jackson, in the American civil war, led his half-naked and ragged troops impetuously against the well-clad and fully accoutred soldiers of the Federal army, carrying victory before him at every step. And in the last continental war—the seven-day campaign between Prussia and Austria—the light equipment of the soldiers of the former, as well as the superior precision of their arms, served to bring matters to an abrupt termination, much to the dis-favour of the heavily harnessed troops of the latter.

I think that the dress of a soldier should be easy, free, and loose, and not calculated to hamper his limbs; and the chest and throat should be perfectly unconfined. In winter, a thick coat of woollen material should be provided—something after the shape worn by some of our volunteer corps—and a light one for the warm season. Above all, a heavy head-dress should be avoided, as it invariably produces headache, especially in warm weather.

The French are particularly careful in the clothing of their soldiers, and avoid any style of dress that would possibly prevent them from free action. Their trousers are loose, and have free ventilation; their head-dress is very light, and renders complete protection to the face and eyes in hot weather, while it is very picturesque in appearance at the same time. The caps of our soldiers are at the present time disgraceful. Their texture is of the coarsest material—more becoming if seen on the head of a pauper than on a military man; while they give no protection whatever to the eyes and countenance. In warm climates ophthalmia is of frequent occurrence among soldiers, caused, undoubtedly, by the eyes being exposed to the sun's rays. In India a white cap-cover is worn, but it gives very little protection to the eyesight. What is wanted is the French or American style—

a peak protruding from the forehead, which completely shades the eyes and protects the face from sunburn.

Then, again, the uselessness of the cross-belt is obvious, as the ammunition can be as well carried in a pouch attached to the waist-belt, thereby taking off the chest the weight of a heavy pouch, with twenty rounds of ball-ammunition—very often forty and sixty. The present ball-pouch is so removed from the men's reach, that for convenience, on field-days, the officers order them to carry the cartridges in their trousers-pockets to prevent a waste of time.

I have endeavoured to show the encumbrance of the dress and equipment of our soldiers, giving to the reader my opinions, founded on practical experience; and with his or *her* kind attention, I will, as far as my humble language and the allotted space for this paper will permit, give a short sketch of the character of our soldiers, and how the standard of morality may be raised from the abnormal position at which it is at present fixed.

Hardly a day goes by without some improvement being suggested by military reformers that will elevate the army socially, and draw to its ranks men who are actuated by no mercenary motives, but who would enrol themselves as patriots, under the folds of the national standard, to shield their country from danger; and, when peace would bless the land, to go forth into civil life as respected and respectable members of society. But notwithstanding all that is said, the army is allowed to remain corrupt and depraved—the vagabond, the thief, and the ruffian finding sanctuary in its ranks, who, by being placed in the company of young men in a common barrack-room, lure them away from the path of virtue, without a friendly hand to stay their progress, and ultimately reduce them to the same disgraceful level as themselves, lost to every high principle of manhood and virtue. Yes! I see it every day. I see it with pain; and that pain is bitterly increased when I see men placed in a position of trust as non-commissioned officers, who, in place of checking immorality and ruffianism, countenance and frequently assist in the work of corruption.

It may be asked, what do the officers do, or do they not try to prevent this state of things? In justice to them, I must say that they do when such cases come under their notice; but, indeed, it is very seldom they

give attention in trying to find them out. They are too careless. When the morning parade is dismissed they disappear, and no more is seen of them till parade assembles again.

A man, no matter of how immoral character, may obtain promotion if he is smart and keeps clear of the defaulters' book, which is very easy. I have seen in a barrack-room a number of soldiers join together to abuse and annoy a young man who refused to enter into their pursuits, and, when complaint was made, everyone left the blame on himself—the non-commissioned officer of the room purposely going out of the way, and the victim pronounced by the officer a “disagreeable man”—perhaps giving him extra drill for making a frivolous complaint.

The greatest hatred is evinced towards any soldier by his comrades if he by any means attempts to show that he is their superior in any respect whatever, and they lead him the life of a dog.

A scamp, who may be only discharged from a prison to-day, to-morrow can present himself to a recruiting-sergeant, who, if he even does know the fellow's antecedents, takes no notice as long as he secures the “bringing money;” and, if the scoundrel is physically qualified, there is no other object or hindrance to his becoming a soldier, and the rascality which characterised him in civil life he carries into the service, and all he is good for is remaining absent whenever he gets out of barracks, and helping to maintain in employment a staff of provost officials to regulate his prison discipline.

The public would be astounded if they knew the enormous amount of the public money that is spent in the support of military prisons to chastise ruffians who should be thrown out from the barrack gates.

It is no wonder that soldiers individually should be avoided by civilians; and that, as Mr. Cardwell says, a broad line of demarcation exists between civil and military society. People merely regard the army as a machine that they pay for fighting their battles and protecting their interests, but avoid anything like familiar intercourse with the members of the rank and file. They like to see grand manœuvres and reviews, delight in praising the soldiers' courage and martial bearing.

Until something be done to procure work for our soldiers that will give them a little remuneration, as well as to occupy their

leisure hours—which are many—and wean them from the canteen and public-house, and recruiting without a test and in vile beer-shops and taverns, it is vain to think of infusing a moral element into the service. When men have nothing to do, lounging about a barrack-room becomes hateful to them, and they immediately fly for relief from *ennui* and monotony to the lowest haunts of vice. “Hard words—harsh truth,” as Lord Byron said; and the army hospital returns will afford indisputable manifestation of my statements. I blush to speak in such disparaging terms of a community to which I belong, the honourable profession of arms—a profession for which I always had an inclination and a fond desire from boyhood. I gave up my chances of a respectable career to join its ranks. I longed for the “pomp and circumstance of glorious war”—to serve my country on the “tented field;” and I have lived to see my fond aspirations and hopes fade away like chimeras of a disordered imagination. Like the boy in the fable, I have been following the rainbow for the hidden treasure at its base, and, after a weary journey, I find the “Ark of Covenant” as far removed as ever; and I am not even allowed to gaze, like Moses, on the promised land, where promotion awaits me. I now feel it is my duty to let the public know my experiences, and to caution other youths in pursuing the *ignis fatuus* which has led me into the mire.

It may be asked, why have I not been promoted? I possess a good character. I will tell you, kind reader. It is because I could never disgrace my manhood by becoming subservient to the meanness and deceit which I see practised by my comrades around me; and I have always been too open in the disapproval of double-dealing. This is said to be, in my corps, “imprudence;” and “imprudent” men never get on.

I quote my own case, not because I wish to excite the sympathy of the reader or the public, but as a truthful exemplification of a rule. I consider it my duty to society to expose the abuses of our military system, and to endeavour to draw public attention to the matter, with a view to a reform in the present state of things, which will become worse and worse if nothing is done to check their course.

The general character of even a soldier's duty is not calculated to give occupation to

his mind, except when he is actually on drill; and, after the first course is gone through, very little of his time is taken up with that. When a man is on guard, after coming off sentry he lounges about the guard-room in idleness; and on sentry all he has to do is to walk about. Indeed, I never was placed in any position that my mind was more given to reverie and meditation than on sentry. A crowd of thoughts—for good or evil, according to the moral state of the person—will rush rapidly through the brain, especially in the solemn midnight hour, when no sound but the tread of the soldier's own footsteps disturbs the silence which reigns around him.

Something ought to be done to provide occupation to engage the attention. A great many have trades at which they could work, like the corps of Royal Engineers; and those intelligent young men who are desirous of learning crafts should be taught crafts, while the more dull of the rank and file could be employed to attend as labourers on the others. In fact, plenty of work could be found, to not only wean soldiers from vice, but remunerate them and enable them, if thrifty, to set up in business for themselves when their time should be expired. A great number of civilians are employed on public work at a great expense to the State; while soldiers, for a small consideration beyond their regimental pay, would do the work equally as well.

Another impediment exists against the entrance of respectable young men into the army. It is the purchase system—a system long since condemned by everyone who has the welfare and credit of the soldier at heart. No youth of sense—unless he be military mad, as I had been—would give up respectable employment and the chance of an honourable career for the sake of winning a sergeant's or sergeant-major's chevrons. He would never be recognized in society as respectable while lower than the rank of a commissioned officer; and, as there is only one sergeant-major to every battalion, his chance of obtaining that grade would be very small. I hope soon to see the day when the purchase of commissions will be abolished and the promotion of deserving and educated men from the ranks take place, the abolition of tavern recruiting, a test of character introduced; and then, I am sure, we will have in our ranks a high standard of morality; but till that consum-

mation is effected the present abnormal level will be maintained against all other efforts of reform.

EAGLES AND SWANS.

A CORRESPONDENT of a contemporary recently reported the singular death of a swan, at Wroxton Abbey, the residence of Colonel and Baroness North. When the keeper went his rounds in the morning, he found on the grassy bank of the pond the wings, legs, and head of one of the swans that were there preserved. The green sward was scratched and disturbed for the space of several yards, and was strewn with feathers and blood. Fur, from a fox's skin, was mingled with the feathers; and it was conjectured that the swan succumbed, not to one fox, but to several, which had made a combined attack upon the sitting bird, and had overpowered it, after a desperate resistance. This is a very unusual circumstance, quite as unusual as that a swannery should be invaded by sea-eagles; and it may be confidently predicted that, whatever picture may be exhibited by Sir Edwin Landseer at the next exhibition of the Royal Academy at Burlington House, it can scarcely create so much controversy and interest as did his swannery canvas in last year's exhibition. That picture was the result of twenty-five years' labour, and was supposed to represent, not a West Highland scene, as was commonly thought, but the cliffs at Abbotsbury, on the Dorset coast, not far from Portland; and the presumed time of the raid must be dated back to that early period when the Saxon abbots of St. Catherine's counted their swans by the ten thousand.

Now, this truly grand picture of Sir Edwin's raised certain questions in natural history; and although the instance above cited demonstrates that (presumably) foxes, in a body, will attack one solitary swan, yet, it may be, and has been, asked, "Will eagles attack swans?" It may be supposed that we are not necessarily to understand by that picture of Sir Edwin's, that, in the absence of the swans, the eagles attacked the cygnets, and were surprised in their onslaught by the sudden return of the parent birds; for neither the picture nor its title seemed to justify this supposition; and

it would appear that it represented both swans and cygnets simultaneously attacked or "invaded by sea-eagles." It is true that Mr. Broderip says (in his "Zoological Recreations," p. 140) that he once saw, in the Zoological Gardens, a newly hatched cygnet of a wild swan (which was swimming at a short distance) pounced upon by a carrion crow, who forthwith paid the penalty of his life for his rashness—the swan darting upon him and holding him under the water until he was drowned. But it by no means follows that several eagles would attack as many swans.

Professor Wilson, who knew as much of eagles from actual observation as did any man living—who closely studied their habits with a poetic insight into and sympathy with their lives, which is in marked contrast to the rhodomontades and contempt dealt to them by Jules Michelet, in "*L'Oiseau*," and who has described them with an unrivalled wealth of words—this same "Christopher North" once expressed a wish that the life of an eagle could be written by itself; and, further, gave an imaginary sketch of such an ornithological biography. But, until this can be done, we must accept certain questions relative to eagles as somewhat speculative; and one of these is that question, so freely mooted last year by those who stood before Sir Edwin's picture, Would eagles attack swans? Professor Wilson himself gives an answer to the question, though it was overlooked by the many critics who wrote on this subject. In his essay entitled "Christopher in his Sporting Jacket," is the following passage:—"The great erne or sea-eagle pounces on the mallard as he mounts from the bulrushes before the wild swans, sailing with all wings hoisted, like a fleet; but osprey nor eagle dares to try his talons on that stately bird, for he is bold in his beauty, and as formidable as he is fair: the pinions that swim and soar can also smite; and, though the one be a lover of war, the other of peace, yet of them it may be said—

'The eagle he is lord above,
The swan is lord below.'

Safe are they from all birds of prey" ("Recreations," i., 73).

Coming from such an authority, such a statement would seem to be conclusive, in the absence of the evidence on which Sir Edwin may have grounded the plot of his

pictorial tragedy. And, in all other passages in which Professor Wilson has mentioned the eagle's quarry, the largest in size is a lamb, or a "week-old fawn, that had left the doe's side but for a momentary race along the edge of the coppice" ("Recreations," iii., 44)—which, by the way, would afford an impressive theme for Sir Edwin's pathetic powers of delineating animal expression. In the true stories narrated by Professor Wilson of infants carried away by eagles, the weight of the child would not exceed that of the lamb or fawn; and such instances of infants thus seized and borne off by the royal bird have, doubtless, occasionally occurred in past as well as recent times, and gave rise to the classical fable of the boy Ganymede carried on the eagle's back to Jupiter. Just before that mention by Professor Wilson of the fawn, is the following passage, which might be taken for a description of one of Sir Edwin's eagles:—"As she has pounced and is exulting over her prey! With her head drawn back between the crescent of her uplifted wings, which she will not fold till that prey be devoured; eye glaring, cruel joy, neck-plumage bristling, tail-feathers fan-spread, and talons driving through the victim's entrails and heart—there she is, and fancy hears her yell and its echo. Beak and talons, all her life long, have had a stain of blood; for the murderess observes no Sabbath, and seldom dips them in loch or sea, except when dashing down suddenly among the terrified water-fowl from her watch-tower in the sky!"

It might further be asked, Would more than a pair of eagles congregate for such an attack? One is here reminded of Sir Philip Sidney's saying, "Eagles fly alone; it is only sheep that herd together;" and this would seem to be true to fact. Although Oliver Goldsmith's "Animated Nature" may be sneered at as "a pot-boiler" and piece of book-making, yet no more delightful book of natural history, as a whole, exists; and its author was at great pains to procure the most accurate information. I therefore do not scruple to quote him on this point:—"Solitary, like the lion, the eagle keeps the desert to himself alone; it is as extraordinary to see two pair (*sic*) of eagles in the same mountain as two lions in the same forest. They keep separate, to find a more ample supply; and consider the quantity of their game as the best proof



Once a Week.
"YOU WILL APOLOGISE, OF COURSE, MORTIMER?" SAID COURTENAY, CALMLY.—(Page 161.)

[March 26, 1870.]

of their dominion." The largest birds mentioned by Goldsmith as forming the quarry of eagles are "geese and cranes."

The third eagle in Sir E. Landseer's picture was represented as sailing in mid-air, having just dropped his prey. I would ask, How do eagles, in flight, hold their prey—with one gripping set of claws, or with two?

The other day I was in the Earl of Stamford's beautiful gardens, at Enville, Staffordshire, watching his keeper feed the eagles. There is a goodly collection, and their home is formed with a centre of massive rock-work, picturesquely disposed, whence radiate strong divisions of iron and wire for the various birds, and the few horned and other rare owls who are their companions and neighbours—the outer circle and the roof being similarly wired and secured. The owls were sitting in the semi-gloom of their caves, but the eagles were perched on their masses of rock, each one looking like Tennyson's royal bird—

"He clasps the crag with hooked hands."

The keeper opened the wire door in the outer circle of the cage, and threw the dead rabbits on the earthen floor: down upon them swooped the eagles, and carried them up to their rocks. In every instance, I noticed that in his flight the eagle used one leg only with which to hold his quarry—though, certainly, it was of no great size, being only a wild rabbit; yet, it was large enough for the eagle to have used both sets of talons had it been his habit so to do. I also bear in mind the fact that the custom of a creature in captivity cannot always be taken as a true representation of its habits while in its normal state of freedom. In this instance, for example, the rabbits were all dead; whereas, close observers of the golden eagle's nature tell us that, in its wild state, it will never feed on what has not been killed by itself. "How hungry soever he may be, he never stoops to carrion," says Goldsmith. "The eagle, like the lion, preys not on carcasses," says Christopher North; who further says that, when poison was strewn over the glen for their destruction, the shepherd dogs who eat the carrion were the only victims. The *erne* (Sir Edwin's eagle) will, however, it is said, eagerly feed on carrion when in its state of freedom.

Then, as to Sir Edwin's swans. One of

these—the mother of the dead cygnet—may be conceded to have struck down her enemy with a powerful stroke of her wing; but, with the others, their bills would appear to be their chief defensive weapons. Is our great painter quite correct in this particular?

A few years ago, I had been fishing in a large pool, into which a long and very narrow strip of land protruded. I was at the extremity of this point when the sun set, and I put up my fishing-tackle, prepared to return home. I had only advanced a few yards, when a great swan stopped my path with outspread wings, and hissed defiance. I then remembered that this very same swan had in the previous week, by a stroke of his wing, broken the thigh of a boy who had been gathering bulrushes on the margin of the pool. As I could not swim, and as the swan fully occupied the narrow strip of land, I was in much perplexity as to what I was to do next. The few attempts that I made to pass the swan were so strenuously repulsed, that I soon decided that it was useless to attempt to force the passage, even with the aid of fishing-rod, creel, and landing-net. I therefore sat down on the end of the slip of land; and, fortunately, the swan did not follow me there, but contented himself with keeping a watchful guard a few yards off. Lovely water-lilies floated near me; and, when I had somewhat composed my thoughts and feelings, I took out a note-book and amused myself by pencilling some verses to a water-lily. They were afterwards published in one of the magazines, though the readers of my poem little knew under what peculiar circumstances it had been written. In the meantime the sun had set and the moon had risen, and still the swan kept guard. My watch told me that it was ten o'clock; and I was beginning to think of the night that I should have to pass, when, to my immense relief, the swan waded into the water. In a moment I had passed him at a run, and had gained the shore in safety, without feeling the weight of his wings. In the interval of my imprisonment I was enabled to be a witness to that beautiful sight, the female swan putting her brood to bed. Floating on the open water, away from the reeds and sedge, she called her cygnets around her, and, spreading out her wings, they climbed under them and there sat, protected for the night from pike and water-rat. Their weight almost water-logged her, but there she

floated, not moving from the spot; and, when I last saw her on that night, her mate was floating near her, as motionless as she.

This carrying of her cygnets during the night is a companion picture to that sketched in these pages (at p. 369 of vol. iii., 1869), where the eagle is mentioned as bearing her young ones on her wings, in order to teach and encourage them to fly. The beautiful simile there mentioned as contained in "The Song of Moses" (Deuteronomy, xxxii., 11, 12), with the poem attached to the article, give, doubtless, the true exposition of the scriptural passage, where the word "nest" means "brood," and where the bearing of the young ones on the wings of the parent bird may be taken as a metaphor. According to an old belief, however, the mother would thus in reality take them upon her wings, and would rise with them to a certain height in the air; and then, shaking them off, would drop with that "thunderbolt" fall which Tennyson has so forcibly described, and thus, flying beneath them as they fell, would catch them once more upon her outstretched wings—repeating this throwing off and catching until the necessity for such instruction had passed away. Such a theory would be the more plausible when matched to that other old idea, that the eagle never hatched more than one egg, but destroyed the others. Christopher North says, "Hark! the eagle's earliest cry, yet in his eyry. Another hour, and he and his giant mate will be seen spirally ascending the skies, in many a glorious gyration, tutoring their offspring to dally with the sunshine, that when their plumes are stronger they may dally with the storm" ("Recreations," ii., 47). He also describes the eagle as being able to walk with "his head up and his tail down; not hopping like a filthy raven, but one foot before the other, like a man—like a king"—(ii., 120). And he speaks of the inaccessible eagle's eyry on Echo Cliff, as being "six feet in diameter, strewn with partridges, moorfowl, and leverets" (i., 92). The position of the eyry had been described so long ago as in Jeremiah, xlix., 16. There are one or two other points as to the eagle which might be noticed, such as the popular, but erroneous, idea that he can "look undazzled on the sun," as Campbell says in his poem on "The Dead Eagle," and as Mrs. Hemans repeats in her verses on "The Wounded

Eagle."* But it is the representation of Sir Edwin's eagles and swans that has led to these remarks; and, whether the great painter be right or wrong in making the former to attack the latter, or in other details of his picture, yet everyone must confess to its wondrous force, and will recognize in the royal bird—

"His power, his beauty, and his majesty,"

as described by Wordsworth in his sonnet on eagles.

A SOLITARY LAMENT.†

THIS desert dell and unfrequented grove
Is hushed to hear the soft-breathed sighs of
love
In still chill silence, save the gentle breeze
Of Zephyr whispers wailing through the trees.
My sorrows here securely may I weep,
If lonely rocks can lovers' secrets keep.
Whence shall I tell the tale of Cynthia's scorn?
Whence shall I wake the strain of love forlorn?
I who was Cupid's favourite of late
Am branded outcast from that favoured state.
What crime of mine has merited your spleen?
Think you your lover has inconstant been?
So may I yet regain your favour lost,
No rival fair one has my threshold crossed.
Though deep the debt my pain doth owe to thee,
I would not have such anger come to me
That I with wrath should pay back your disdain,
And trace of tears your peerless eyelids stain.
What, though no blush nor paleness show my
love,
Nor changing cheeks my glowing passion prove,
Witness for me, if trees bear love's record,
Ye beech and pine—dear to Arcadia's lord—
How oft my songs resound beneath your shade,
And Cynthia's name is carved throughout 'the
glade.
Ah, Cynthia! through thy scorn what griefs I feel,
But only to the silent doors reveal:
Meekly I've bent to bear thy haughty sway,
Nor dared complain, or ever say thee nay.
And my reward is this cold chilly ground,
And rural rest upon this sloping mound,
And lonely days of lost neglected love
To pour unto the warblers of the grove.
But "Cynthia" still the woods around proclaim,
And desert rocks re-echo to thy name.

* In the recently published work, "Fugitive Poems connected with Natural History and Physical Science," collected by the late C. G. B. Daubeny, M.D. (Parker and Co.), is the following verse:—

"The eagle wings his flight 'mong solar beams,
And nictitating meets the flood of light,
His visual focus through the medium gleams
On every distance which encounters sight."

† Translated from Propertius, Bk. i., Eleg. xviii.

CAUGHT BY A THREAD.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE being neither friend nor relative of the deceased man with whom Fenwick could communicate, he assumed the sad duty of giving directions for the funeral. On the following Monday he entered the drawing-room formerly occupied by Mr. Hurlston, and began a search for any papers which might give an insight into the true state of affairs with regard to the property in Australia. Remembering where he had been requested to place the will, Fenwick first went to the drawer of the small square table which stood in the centre of the room, and, trying several keys which Mrs. O'Sullivan had delivered to him, at last found one which fitted the lock. The document was still there, and with it were several letters from Mr. Horace Winnow, of South Sea-court, Throgmorton-street, in reference to the land at Port Adelaide; but Fenwick vainly sought for the agreement entered into by the company which Mr. Hurlston had alluded to some weeks previously. A further search through a miscellaneous collection of papers, contained in a couple of old trunks, led to no better result. There only remained the contents of a portmanteau to examine; but these merely consisted of a few articles of clothing. He was about to replace them, when a folded paper, almost yellow with age, attracted his attention. Upon the outside of it, written in faded ink, were the words—"My dear Mary's last gift, April, 1799." It contained a lock of light brown hair, which had become dry and shrunken.

Mrs. O'Sullivan entered the room a moment after; and, with some hesitation, inquired from whom she might expect to be paid for the last month's rent of the rooms. "He told me I should have the money on Saturday last, but the poor old man didn't live to keep his promise," she said, twisting up the corner of her apron. "Of coorse, if he's left no property behind him but what's here, I must be content with that; but I've heard him say he was worth millions. I'm not goin' to spake a worred against him that's gone—rest his sowl!—but I must tell ye that he never had much money while he was here."

"I will take care that you are paid what

is due," said Fenwick, as he locked the portmanteau and put the key in his pocket.

"Sure, I thought ye would, sur, for I know ye wor a great frind of his; and the baker tould me this mornin' that Mr. Hurlston had made a will leaving ye all he possessed."

"How did the baker become aware of that?" asked Fenwick.

"How? Why he's one of the witnesses to the signin' of it."

Finding that Fenwick was indisposed to continue the conversation, Mrs. O'Sullivan descended to the kitchen, leaving him at liberty to reflect upon the best course to pursue in order to ascertain the actual state of Mr. Hurlston's affairs at the time of his death. After some consideration, the young man decided on calling upon Mr. Horace Winnow, in the hope of obtaining some information on this point. Arrived at the stockbroker's office, Fenwick was informed by Mr. Chirp's successor that Mr. Winnow was out.

"If it's anything important that you wish to see him about, I know where to find him," said the clerk. "He's on 'Change, and I can bring him here in five minutes."

"I wish you would," said Fenwick; "for it will be inconvenient to me to call again to-day."

The clerk put on his hat, invited Fenwick to take a chair, and then left the office. But, instead of going to the Stock Exchange, he went into a lane leading out of Throgmorton-street, and entered a house, over the door of which was a large lamp, on which was painted an announcement in which the words "billiards" and "pool" figured the most prominently. In a few minutes Mr. Horace Winnow returned to his offices, and Fenwick was ushered into the stockbroker's private room.

"This is rather a busy time of the day on 'Change," said Mr. Winnow, rubbing his waistcoat, on which were the marks of chalk.

"I hope my sending for you has not occasioned you much inconvenience?"

"Oh, not at all. I told my clerk to come for me in case I was wanted," replied Mr. Winnow, stroking his long whiskers.

"The object of my visit is to make some inquiries about the affairs of the late Mr. Hurlston."

"The late Mr. Hurlston! Why, you don't mean to tell me that the old gentleman is dead?"

"I regret to say that he died very suddenly a few days ago."

"The deuce!" exclaimed Mr. Winnow. "I imagined that his constitution was good enough to last for another twenty years. By the bye, I wonder how old he was. He must have been nearly seventy."

"He was in his eighty-sixth year."

"Bless my soul! I never supposed he was so old as that."

"I once heard him mention your name in connection with a sum of money that he wished to obtain; and, as I have found among his papers several letters of yours on the subject, you can probably inform me who the persons are who have recently entered into an agreement to purchase a part of the land at Port Adelaide."

"Oh, yes. But may I ask if you are a relative of Mr. Hurlston?"

"I am not; but you will easily understand that I am interested in ascertaining the facts of the case, when I tell you that he has made me his heir."

"Allow me to offer you my congratulations," said Mr. Winnow, opening his eyes to their utmost width. "The company in question—which owes its formation in a great measure to me—has offices in Gresham-street. You will find the contract which the directors made with Mr. Hurlston among his papers."

"I have not been able to discover it, though I have made a very careful search."

"Then he has very likely deposited it with someone. Have you made an inquiry at his banker's?"

"I really am quite ignorant of who they are. He told me on Thursday last that he had received twenty-five thousand pounds in part payment of the land which he had sold, but I can find no document which in any way refers to it; so that I am rather at a loss to understand what he has done with the money."

"My dear sir, I think I can enlighten you on that point. At his request, the money was paid to Messrs. Floyd and Son, the bankers; and there is not the slightest doubt that it has been placed to the credit of the account which Mr. Hurlston opened with them last week."

"I am extremely obliged to you for the information you have afforded me."

"Oh, don't mention it," said Mr. Winnow, in a cheerful tone; "it gives me great pleasure to have been of some little service to you. Of course," he continued, after a moment's pause, "you will not allow so large

a sum as that to remain in the hands of a banker, when it can be made to yield a much higher rate of interest by judicious investment?"

"That is a matter for subsequent consideration."

"Exactly. But, while you *are* here, allow me to give you one of my share lists."

Mr. Winnow handed Fenwick a sheet of very thin paper, closely printed; and then, as Fenwick took up his hat, the stockbroker went to the green baize door and held it open for his visitor to pass out.

"Engaged, is he?" said a voice, which Fenwick recognised as that of Bentley Wyvern.

"Oh, no; come in," cried Mr. Winnow, bowing very ceremoniously to Fenwick, as he took his leave.

"Are you acquainted with that young man who has just gone out?" asked Bentley Wyvern, as the stockbroker reclosed the door of his private office.

"Never saw him before; but I learn from this card, which he gave my clerk, that his name is Towers."

"Is he applying to you to get him some employment?" demanded Bentley Wyvern.

"Why do you suppose that likely to be the case?" asked Mr. Winnow, in a tone of surprise.

"Because I know that the fellow is in very needy circumstances. A short time ago I gave him something to do myself, and paid him liberally."

"Did you indeed? Then I'm afraid he must have quite forgotten the circumstance; for he looked very hard at you as he went out, and yet didn't show any inclination to recognize you."

"Perhaps he was conscious that I shouldn't have taken the slightest notice of him if he had," said Bentley Wyvern, with a sneer.

"What! has he behaved badly to you?"

"There's a ridiculous assumption of superiority in his way of speaking, which, in my opinion, is highly impertinent."

"I have seen so little of him that I am unable to arrive at any conclusion on that point. I can only assure you that he was civil and unassuming enough during his interview with me," remarked Mr. Winnow, seating himself, and pointing to a chair which stood near to him.

"He had probably some object to serve

by that course," rejoined Bentley Wyvern, looking keenly at his interlocutor.

"He merely came here to make some inquiries about the affairs of an eccentric old fellow, named Hurlston, who has just died."

"Indeed! But why does Mr. Fenwick Towers trouble himself about the matter?"

"Simply, because Hurlston made a will leaving all his property to him."

"All his property! Well, I don't suppose that would amount to much," said Bentley Wyvern, laughing sardonically, as he sat down.

"I am unable to tell you what the value of the whole of it is; but I know that part of it, consisting of land, has just been sold for fifty thousand pounds, and that half that sum has already been paid to Mr. Hurlston's bankers."

"Then this young man, Towers, will possess quite a fortune?" said Bentley Wyvern, slowly.

"I believe so," replied Mr. Winnow, carelessly.

"Now I understand why he refused the offer of an excellent appointment in Australia. He must have been aware that a will had been made in his favour."

Mr. Winnow shrugged his shoulders, and began to play with a paper-knife between his fingers.

"How are Great Puddlingdons going on to-day?" asked Bentley Wyvern, after a minute's silence, during which the corners of his mouth twitched perceptibly.

"Steady, with a tendency to rise," answered the sharebroker promptly. "It was fortunate that you made a further investment in them."

"I think that I have held them long enough. They have increased in value even beyond my expectations; but I am of opinion that they are now worth as much as they ever will be: at any rate, I don't like to run any risk of their going downwards in the market."

"Of course, if you instruct me to sell I must do so; but I am of opinion that you had much better keep them for another month or two. Next week I shall be able to obtain a more detailed account of the new lode which is said to have been discovered."

"What, another?"

"So I am told."

"Well, I am willing to wait till next week, and if no further advance takes place by

that time I shall dispose of the whole of the shares, as I require the money for other purposes."

"And your friend, Mr. Clare?"

"Oh, he will very likely keep his shares."

"By the bye, I have received an invitation to his daughter's wedding to-morrow. I suppose I may thank Sir Charles Pennington for that?"

"No doubt—no doubt," replied Bentley Wyvern, somewhat absently.

"What's the matter, Wyvern; you don't seem in your usual spirits?"

"You are mistaken, my dear Winnow, I was merely thinking of the unexpected news you have given me respecting Mr. Towers."

Bentley Wyvern rose from his chair, shook hands with the sharebroker with a great show of cordiality, and rather hastily quitted the office.

CHAPTER XV.

MEANWHILE, Fenwick had called at the banking-house of Messrs. Floyd and Son, where he had ascertained from one of the partners that both the money paid for the land, and the agreement made for the purchase of it, were deposited with that firm. Hitherto, he had not quite realised the change in his prospects; but, as he walked back to Northumberland-street, he experienced a feeling of the deepest gratitude towards the old man who, by providing him with ample means, now enabled him to ask Mary to become his wife, without that fear, which previously restrained him, of exposing her to the hardships inseparable from poverty. I am afraid that some of my fair readers will think Fenwick Towers a very unromantic and commonplace young man. He has not yet throttled anyone by the grasp of one of his hands; neither has he seized a mad bull by the horns and stopped him in full career. It is equally certain that, when forbidden to continue his visits to the rectory, he made no proposal to elope with the woman whom he loved; but chose rather to wait till, by patient industry, he had secured a fair prospect of keeping the wolf from the door. But now an act of disinterested kindness towards an old man had relieved Fenwick from the necessity of continuing his struggle to secure a mere competence, and left him free to devote himself to higher objects.

He had hardly entered his scantily furnished sitting-room, when Mrs. O'Sullivan

came in, holding a cheque-book in her hand.

"I found this in the pocket of the poor old gentleman's dressing gown," she said, placing it upon the table.

Fenwick opened it, and saw that only one of the cheques had been torn out, and that the next one was filled up for the sum which he had lent to Mr. Hurlston. On the counterfoil of the cheque which had been taken out were written the letters "R. F.," followed by the sum for which it had been drawn.

"Mr. Bender called here about an hour ago, and said he was going on to Brook-street; but if he didn't foind ye there he'd come back, as he wanted to see ye without delay. I dare say that's him knockin' at the door now," she continued, as she walked out of the room.

In a couple of minutes the detective made his appearance.

"I'm glad as you're at home, Mr. Towers," he said, taking out a yellow silk handkerchief and wiping his forehead. "When I saw what had happened last Friday I knew you wouldn't be in the humour to talk to me just then; and, as I was rather short of time, I went away as soon as the doctor came."

"You wish to know whether I have learnt anything further about Ralph Fletcher?"

"Well, that's one of the things I came to ask you about," replied Mr. Bender, looking round to ascertain that the door was closed.

"I don't think there is the slightest probability of your being able to apprehend him, for I have strong reason to believe that he has already sailed for Australia."

"In what ship?" asked Mr. Bender, quickly; "p'raps she may still be in the river."

"I am unable to give any information on that point."

"That's a pity," said the detective, in a tone of regret. "However, I won't give up the hunt yet, and will take care to have every vessel searched that sails for Australia during the next week or two. There's nothing like perseverance if you wish to succeed in a thing. And now, Mr. Towers, I want to ask you whether you've heard the report that your father is going to be married?"

"I have."

"Well, what do you think of the match?" inquired Mr. Bender, looking with an expression of curiosity at the young man.

"Think of it! why, that it will be a disgrace to our family," replied Fenwick, bitterly.

"Then I may conclude that you haven't a very good opinion of her."

"Before I discuss a subject of this kind with a stranger, I should like to learn the object of these questions," said Fenwick.

"Of course, that's only nat'ral," observed Mr. Bender, smiling benevolently. "You said just now that your family would be disgraced by such a marriage, and I happen to know that you're right in that respect."

"Are you aware of any circumstance affecting her character?" demanded Fenwick, anxiously.

"Well, I rather think I am," answered the detective, very dryly.

"Then let me know the particulars without delay, and I will reward you beyond your most sanguine expectations."

"I call that an uncommon fair offer, and I'm not a-going to refuse it. Still I'm not sure that I oughtn't to defer an explanation till to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" repeated Fenwick, impatiently, "what reason can you possibly have for keeping me in suspense till then?"

"Well, I was going about another. However, I suppose I must alter my plans a bit in order to oblige you."

"And to obtain the reward I have promised you."

"I dare say what I have got to say would be of as much service if told to you to-morrow as it will be to-day. Your father is not going to be married till Wednesday. I've a notion," continued the detective, indulging in a slight laugh, "that the wedding won't take place even then."

"I earnestly hope that it may not."

"You must know, Mr. Towers, that I never forget a face which I have once studied. Some months ago, in the neighbourhood of the Bank of England, I found myself standing by a nicely dressed lady, who was waiting for a chance to get across the street, without the danger of being knocked down and run over. It at once occurred to me that I had seen her before; and the longer I looked at her the more certain I became as I wasn't mistaken; but, for the life of me, I couldn't exactly recollect where I had previously seen her. I spoke to her, in order to find out if she had any recollection of *me*; but she pretended that I was a perfect stranger to her, and, even when I told her what my line of business

was, she listened to me as cool as cucumbers. Now, although she acted her part so well, and was dressed quite like a lady, I suspected she had been in my custody at some time or other. A few days ago, when I saw you at Wilmington House, the same woman was in the room when I went in. She turned quickly aside when she caught sight of me, and kept her face turned towards the window all the time as I was speaking to you and the captain. Do you remember my searching for a pencil in order to write down my name?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, that was merely to give me an excuse for asking her for the piece of paper, with my name on it, that I saw she held in her hand. Your father, however, was a little too quick for me; but still I got an opportunity of getting a better look at her face than I had as I entered the room."

"And she proved to be the same woman that you had spoken to near the Bank of England?"

"Not a doubt of it."

"Is this all that you can tell me about her?" asked Fenwick, in a somewhat disappointed tone.

"Not quite," answered Mr. Bender, shaking his head knowingly. "I was a good deal puzzled at hearing her called Susan in that familiar way by the captain, and began to think that she was a relation of his, and that after all I must have made a mistake. But when I left the house, and turned the matter over in my mind, all my former suspicions returned, and I determined to ask you what her position was in the family. You told me that she was the housekeeper; and, from inquiries I afterwards made, I learnt that she was about to be married to the captain. Lord, how silly some men are! I wouldn't, if I was single this moment, make that there woman my wife, even if she was a duchess with thousands a-year."

"Then you have ascertained that your suspicions were well founded," said Fenwick, in much agitation.

"Oh! I was right enough. It ain't often as I make a mistake of that kind. I got a man that's been many years employed in one of the prisons, and we went to Wilmington Heath together, and watched the house till she came out. He soon told me where I had first seen her, and what she was convicted for."

"Convicted!"

"Aye! She got ten years' penal servitude, and her time expired about three years since."

"I must instantly acquaint my father with the dreadful character of the woman whom he is about to marry," said Fenwick, excitedly.

"Are you going to Wilmington House at once?" asked Mr. Bender, with some show of uneasiness.

"Certainly."

"Then, with your leave, I'll go with you. I've a little matter of business to look after in that neighbourhood."

"Come with me by all means. I shall be glad to have you present at our interview, in order that you may corroborate my statement."

Mr. Bender smiled dubiously, and put his hand into his coat pocket, as if to ascertain that he was provided with some article that he might require. The jingle of iron which followed this movement was disagreeably suggestive of the detective's occupation.

TABLE TALK.

IN OUR LAST NUMBER we made a note of Dean Mansel's reply to a correspondent on the subject of the charges made for seeing the wonders of St. Paul's; and we adverted to the national subscription set on foot some years ago, for the laudable purpose of decorating the interior of the cathedral with frescoes and stained glass, in conformity with the original design of the architect. We are sorry to say the work has made but little progress, though it is essential to the internal beauty of Wren's noble pile. There was a chance years ago of something respectable being done in this way; but the extinguisher was then applied by the hand of the Bishop of London, Dr. Terrick. It appears that Dr. Newton, Bishop of Bristol and Dean of St. Paul's, took a great interest in the decoration of the cathedral; and one day, when Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. West were dining at his house, he observed, "How great an ornament it would be to that cathedral if it were to be furnished with appropriate paintings to fill up those large compartments and panels, which the architect himself had proposed to add to finish his building." Mr. West and Sir Joshua both generously offered to fill up two of the spaces. Sir

Joshua offered a "Nativity," and Mr. West a "Moses giving the Laws." The Bishop, who was also Dean of St. Paul's, at once accepted the offer of the two artists. It was necessary to obtain the consent of the King, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, the Dean and Chapter, and the Lord Mayor for the time being. Dr. Newton applied for and obtained the consent of the King, the Archbishop, the Chapter, and the Mayor. But when he called upon Dr. Terrick, and with considerable exultation told his lordship of the good progress he had made, the Bishop of London, looking very grave, said, "My good Lord Bishop of Bristol, I have already been distantly and imperfectly informed of such an affair having been in contemplation; but as the sole power at last remains with myself, I therefore inform your lordship that while I live and have the power I will never suffer the doors of the Metropolitan Church to be opened for the introduction of Popery in it." So there the affair ended, in the discomfiture of the Dean and the painters. We are indebted for this anecdote to an account published in the year 1816. We wish that in 1870, with no such obstacles in the way of improvement, something more could be done in the matter than has yet been effected.

A CORRESPONDENT: There is a little fatherless child whom I often meet, and who, when the first question in the catechism is put to him, gives as a somewhat composite reply, "Such is life." He is frequently brought forward, both as an illustrative quotation and an expression of philosophical resignation, sometimes aptly, oftener absurdly; and the number of poetical parents he receives on these occasions is perfectly marvellous. Albeit I have called him a fatherless *child*, he is trite, stale, and hackneyed. I only want a father for him, and then to say *Requiescat in pace*.

THE WRITER OF the article, "The Shrieking Sisterhood," in the *Saturday Review*, March 12th, has, in the following sentence, stumbled into rhyme—perhaps to escape the imputation of being prosy:—"Of one thing women may be very sure, though they invariably deny it; the world is glad to take good work from whomsoever will supply it"—an apophthegm that is worthy of "Poor Richard."

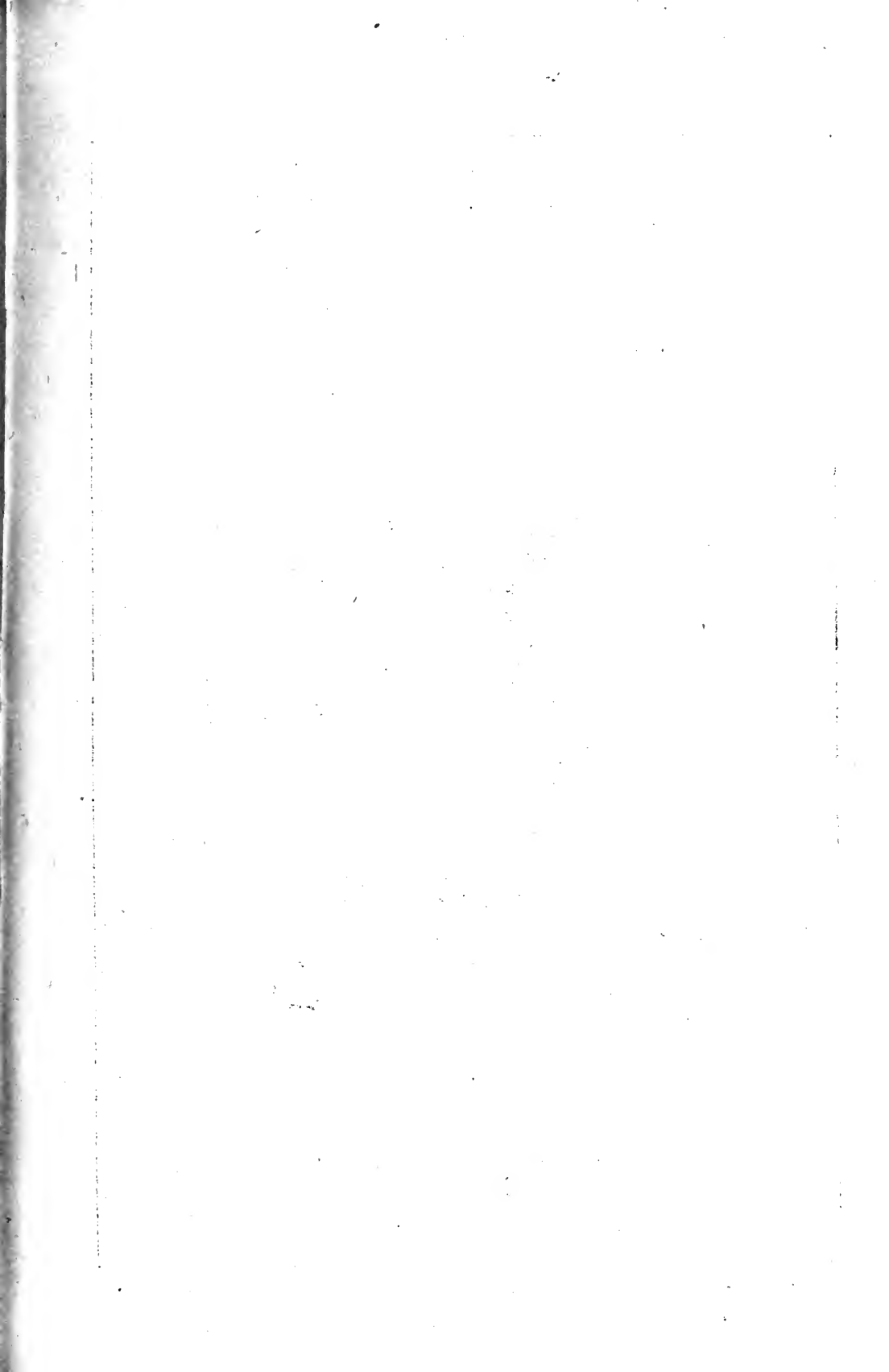
A CORRESPONDENT: In an article on "The Progress of Gastronomy," in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, Fin-*bec* speaks of the excellence of "stewed hedgehogs." This little animal is a well-known gipsy dish. A gipsy covers his hedgehog with a complete coat of hard clay earth, and then puts it into a wood fire. When the clay is sufficiently baked it is broken off, and the rough skin of the hedgehog comes off with it, leaving the white flesh cooked and ready for eating. I have been assured by gipsies that it is the most delicate food, similar to chicken or rabbit; but, in gipsy judgment, superior to either. I once possessed a terrier, given to me by the noted huntsman, Tom Sebright, and of a peculiar cross, bred by himself. This dog had a wonderful nose for hedgehogs; and, when he found them, he not only made a note of them, but never left them until he had killed them. I have known him kill as many as four in the course of an hour's walk; and he often came back home with me, his muzzle streaming with blood from his encounters. One day a gipsy met me and asked me if I would sell the dog. I inquired what he would give; and, after some talk, the gipsy rose his offer to £3. I then told him about the dog's peculiar capabilities for catching hedgehogs, when the gipsy at once advanced his offer to £5, and took the gold out of his pocket. But I would not part with my friend and companion. I asked the gipsy what he would have done with the dog, and he said, "I could have got £10 for him from the gentlemen at Cambridge College." That same gipsy told me that, "for a nice dinner, there was nothing to compare with hedgehog." He also assured me that the popular idea that hedgehogs suck cows is altogether erroneous.

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Once a Week.]

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"WHAT WILL MOTHER SAY?"—DRAWN BY S. F. HEWITT.

ONCE A WEEK

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THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK II.—CHAPTER V.

WOUNDED.



AFTER

THE reply sent by the noisy party to the polite message from the tutor, and the challenge conveyed to his ears—already, doubtless, much shocked—by the renewal of the uproar, which followed immediately

upon the reception of his hint that it was time to separate, the assembled party were prepared, at the sound of footsteps on the staircase, for an angry visit from that high functionary and one or two of his myrmidons. They were agreeably surprised when, on the door being unceremoniously opened, there entered only three or four of the men who, being soberly disposed, had left long before the midnight hour, and had just dropped into Courtenay's rooms to see how things were going on there, before they retired to their own chambers.

Passing from the bright moonlight and cool night breeze out of doors into the heated atmosphere of the supper-room,

heavy with the fumes of punch and tobacco, what a scene of excitement presented itself! Erle, violently moved by contending feelings of shame and indignation, stood with menacing looks confronting Mortimer. Courtenay and Marsden, each with a hand on his shoulder, were begging him to be calm, as, impatient of their grasp, he stood with his fists clenched, knitting his brows, and casting indignant glances at the man who, without provocation on his part, had so wantonly and grossly insulted him.

A little knot of his friends clustered round Mortimer, and made strenuous efforts to bring him to his senses, and persuade him to make what amends still lay in his power for the injury he had inflicted, by offering there and then ample apology, and retraction of his offensive speech. But without effect. The wine he had drunk had done its work. He remained obstinate, sullen, and dogged; nor could any satisfactory reply to their entreaties or arguments be wrung from him. In his sober senses he would have shrunk with a natural horror from an offence such as he had been guilty of, and from the course he still chose to pursue.

Vanity and selfishness were, without doubt, at all times his besetting faults, and both were wounded keenly by the election of his rival to the post he had felt sure of obtaining, almost without the semblance of a struggle: so confident were his party of being in a considerable majority when the votes came to be taken. Already excited, and hurrying back—as he thought—to receive the news of his success, he was disappointed and nettled beyond expression at the result, when he heard it from his friends before he had reached the gates of Tudor.

Under his assumed gaiety and carelessness about the course events had taken, he only strove to conceal the canker gnawing at his heart. The consequent mental dis-

turbance and depression drove him to a too free indulgence at the table: he drained cup after cup, until passion had mastered reason, and all power of self-control was gone. Then, swelling with feelings of wounded pride, Childers, by his ill-timed prank, had applied the match to the mine; and, mad from the combined effects of wine and anger, the insidious whisperings of the worthy Brady had been flung in the teeth of Erle by Robert Mortimer's son. And the words, uttered in a moment of insensate passion, it was beyond his power to recall. It was impossible that such insult could be wiped out from the recollection, or such deep injury repaired.

The three or four young men who had just entered upon the scene, as soon as they were informed of the cause of the disturbed state of affairs, added their efforts to those of Mortimer's immediate friends, but without effect.

The effect of the interest aroused by the quarrel which had so suddenly arisen was, in several of the doubtful cases, to make the lookers-on tolerably sober again. They gathered round the chief actors in the scene with an intense anxiety for the result.

Erle stood still, with his arms drawn back in a menacing and defiant attitude, close to the chair in which Mortimer sat. A friendly hand was on each shoulder; or in that mood, smarting under the lash of wanton insult, he might have punished his assailant by a shower of blows from his strong arm. Nor was there a man in the room who would have thought this other than a righteous vengeance, though all would instinctively have interposed to stop it.

With colourless cheeks, started eyes, and his whole frame trembling with emotion, Erle continued to stand for the space of a minute, biting his lip till the blood flowed, in his violent effort to restrain himself. Beyond a disconnected word or two—such was the suddenness of the shock—his feelings had found no utterance. Suddenly he staggered back a few paces. The thought flashed across his mind—he could not rebut the charge. The glowing flush of shame suffused his face. He covered his eyes with his hands, seemingly bent double by the stroke.

The silent fear, the hopeless dread of his life had come to light at last. His sensitive mind was stunned by the blow. Abruptly breaking away from Courtenay and Marsden,

he made a strong and painful effort to command himself sufficiently to speak. Turning to Mortimer, he said—"You shall answer this, sir, when you are responsible for the words you speak." And, seizing a cap, he strode hurriedly out through the open door.

Of course, the effect produced by the affair with which the proceedings of the evening had concluded was of a most disagreeable kind. Expressions of extreme annoyance and regret were heard on all sides, Mortimer's disgraceful conduct being commented upon in pretty strong terms; and he was blamed and advised without any inclination on the part of his associates to spare his feelings in the matter. He resented this action, but did not offer to defend himself further than by saying he was quite prepared to take the responsibility of what he had done on his own shoulders, and that he had said no more than he knew to be the truth. After remaining for a few minutes longer, he announced his intention of leaving the college for his own lodgings; and one or two of his friends who were going in that direction rose to go at the same time, offering to accompany him. He quitted Courtenay's rooms with two other men, who walked with him as far as his lodgings on the Parade, and did not leave him until they saw him rap and ring loudly at the door, when they hurried off to their own quarters.

The scene being thus cleared of the two principal personages, a very warm discussion took place upon the merits of the case.

"There will be a pretty fuss made if the authorities hear about this," Marsden remarked.

"There will be a wummy wow, as you say," observed another gentleman. "They'll send Mortimer down, that's certain. It's the wummiest of wum wows."

"Yes," said Courtenay, "he deserves to be punished in some way for such an outrageous attack upon an inoffensive man."

"I'm afraid there is some truth in his insulting taunt," said another. "That man Erle has always been a mystery to me. He's an awfully good fellow, though. By ged! I am sorry this has occurred."

"He's always a mystery to me, too," remarked the sapient Fitzboodle. "I never could quite make him out. He always puzzled me—always. What wemedy or wedness can be found, you know. By Jove!

it is a wum affair. I shouldn't like to be made wefewee."

"Well, we are quite sure you won't be asked to give any assistance, Mr. Fitzboodle," said Marsden.

"Perwhaps not," replied that gentleman; "and I am wather glad than not, I assure you."

"Erle is a fine, honourable fellow: there is not a man in the college I would sooner make a friend of," said Courtenay; "but as he was in the year below me, we have never been thrown together much. I am awfully sorry for him—he seemed so frightfully cut up."

"There is hardly another man in Tudor so well built, or anybody more plucky. And, didn't he row for us that last night!"

"I know one thing," said a very diminutive but very courageous young Briton at the other side of the table, "I don't care a rap for this. I shall show Erle I think the same of him, clear or not clear."

"So will everybody, of course," said Courtenay.

"I wonder where Mortimer heard such a thing?" Marsden remarked, inquiringly. "Nobody knows anything about Erle; he has always kept himself very much to himself."

"He goes to London for his 'vac's.'"

"Why didn't he contradict Mortimer? I've seen him about with an old Frenchman; could he be his governor?"

"He's most awfully thick with Campbell, the classical lecturer," observed Mr. Fitzboodle; "they are always walking out together. I see them when I am out for a wide. Campbell's a jolly fellow though; he let me off constwuing two days winning."

"I wonder if Erle will go to the Dons about this," asked Marsden.

"I think certainly not," replied Courtenay. And this was the general opinion of the gentlemen present; who, after some further conversation about the matter, separated for the night; Courtenay and several others having expressed an intention of calling on Mortimer as soon as he was up in the morning.

Erle, after leaving the scene of the supper, with his hands thrust in his pockets, and with hasty, irresolute strides, made in the direction of his own rooms, which overlooked the river. But not directly did he go. He chose a circuitous path, under the dark shade of

the heavy cloisters, where he was sure of meeting no loiterer still up and rambling about in the bright and pleasant moonlight. He preferred the longer distance—sheltered as it was from the chance of observation—to walking in a straight line across the broad gravel paths and smoothly shaven grass-plots of the two quadrangles he had to pass. His way lay through the screens, and, emerging from the dark passage into the light again, he stood close under the rooms occupied by his friend Campbell. Instinctively he looked up, as he had done at late hours on many nights before, when he had felt disposed for a gossiping talk of half an hour or so before he betook himself to bed. The old student was not yet tired of his book. A ray of yellow light from his lamp came peeping through his window-curtains, and was soon absorbed and lost in the brighter light without. Erle stopped, looked up, paused for a moment in hesitation, then turned on his heel with a sudden impulse, and strode down the echoing cloisters towards his own rooms. The sight of his name—ERLE—in conspicuous white letters, standing out in bold relief on the black paint of his outer oak, suggested afresh to his mind Mortimer's insult—the challenge of his right to bear it. He found his key, and, with an involuntary shudder, opened the door and passed into his room.

A letter, addressed to him in a neat foreign hand—with straight upstrokes and downstrokes, and sharp angles, and a great red seal—lay on his table by his unused tray of tea-things, placed there to catch his eye on his return by the careful hand of bedmaker or gyp. His fire was laid ready for lighting in the grate; his candles stood, with the match-box beside them, on the table by the tea-tray; but he did not stop to strike a light. Giving a fierce tug at his curtains, he pulled them back with a jerk, and, drawing up his blind, the moonbeams streamed in through the window, and flooded the room with their pale light. Pale and clear shone moonbeam and star-beam, breathing a peaceful calm. Bright were the moonbeams, dallying with the dark ripples on the narrow river, playing round the branches of the willow bending down to kiss the sluggish tide. Bright were the moonbeams streaming through the casement, shining on his pale face and golden hair, breathing the breath of peace. Cool and refreshing were the gentle breezes of the summer night that,

wafted from the elms, and sward, and river, fanned his heated brow, and brought back some of the colour to his parched lips.

"My God! why—why was I born?" he gasped, in his agony, as, with one foot on the low window-seat, he stood gazing out on the scene before him. On the calm beauty of the night he looked; heard the low whispered melody of the water's flow, the wind sighing through the branches of the elms, the scarce perceptible rustle of the leaves as the light breeze stirred them, the clear, soft note of some late nightingale in the grove beyond. But he heeded not then their message. Feelings of shame, anger—mingled with a sharp and terrible dread of meeting again the men who saw him so insulted—filled his swelling breast. Now his spirit panted for a just vengeance. Now he would creep into some hole, hide his head, and die.

"Oh God! why I ever born?" was the exclamation, the bitter cry of lament that, in the tumultuous conflict of impassioned, half-formed thought, was wrung from his lips again and again. Still he stood at the half-opened window, and still the moonbeams streamed in upon him, flooding his room with their soft light. How bright was the night! How beautiful the scene! The river running its slow course close under the windows of his room, sparkling in the moonbeams. The sloping banks opposite clothed with rhododendron shrubs, full of pink and purple blossoms. The shining gravel-path leading down an avenue of limes, through tall and massive wrought-iron gates out into the Backs. The little gardener's cottage opposite, with its brown thatched roof, all curious nooks and gables, and yellow washed walls, up which the roses were trained, giving forth their fragrance to the night air; flanked by the long and stately row of old elm trees. And looking down the river, past the grey stone bridge, overhung by a giant willow, King's Chapel was seen in bold relief, standing high above the yellow stone façade of Clare.

How often on such a night had Erle gazed from his windows on the beautiful scene that lay spread out before him, enjoying to the fullest measure the calm and quiet repose, the fair loveliness of nature around him! And how often, as he contemplated this charming scene, had he recalled the words applied by a poet who

spent a great part of his life within his college walls to another spot:

"I feel the gales that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow;
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring."

But to his breast, agitated by powerful and conflicting emotions, what winds could waft the breath of peace? What breezes bring to his weary soul sensations of happiness or joy? In the dull pangs of his bitter woe—in the weariness of his consuming anguish—he wished for death.

CHAPTER VI.

A LEAP INTO THE DARK TIDE.

THE clock in the old tower struck two. Barely an hour had passed since that crushing blow was dealt, but it seemed to Erle much longer distant from the present. Having stood leaning against the window so long, he was stiff; when at last he moved, and began to walk uneasily about his room. Some minutes he passed thus, until a memory of the good Doctor's love for him, of Madam's kindness and Lavelle's, induced a softer mood. In his first crushing misery he wanted no other ear than the empty air, into which to pour his threats of vengeance, or his passionate cries of woe. Now he felt the human longing for sympathy. He had but one friend near. There was but that one face from which he would not flee; but that one man from whom he could gather one little grain of consolation, one slender ray of hope. He snatched up his hat from the floor where it had fallen, and advanced on the impulse of the momentary thought as far as the door.

"Campbell will be gone to bed by this time," he muttered to himself, and was turning back. A moment's reflection, however, made him alter his mind, and determine to see if it were so. Again threading his way through the shadows of the old cloisters, after a second or two of quick walking, he stood under Campbell's window.

Through the opening between the imperfectly closed curtains the light was still to be seen. On any night before he would have roared out at the top of his voice, until his friend answered the summons and appeared at the window; now he mounted the creaking oak stairs with a few rapid

strides, quickly reaching the landing. Campbell's outer door or oak was shut—or, as they say at Cambridge, *sported*. Erle hesitated a moment about disturbing his friend, but finally gave a couple of gentle taps. There was no answer from within. He rapped with his knuckles more loudly, but no notice was taken of his knocks.

"Campbell must be in bed," he said. However, he repeated his summons, and this time with effect.

A voice from the bedroom called out—"Hal-lo! who's there at this hour?"

"I," said Erle, hearing the scholar's footsteps approaching.

"And who is 'I,' pray?" demanded the voice.

"'I,' is me—Erle," Reginald answered, in a low tone.

"'I, is *me*?' Oh, Erle! Erle!" said Campbell, laughing, and slowly opening his door, and discovering himself fully dressed in his ordinary costume, to which was added an extinguisher-shaped white cotton nightcap, the donning of which was always Mr. Campbell's first step towards undressing. "What's all this mystery about? Where's your voice, man? Have you roared yourself hoarse at that noisy carnival you've been holding, to the annoyance of everybody in college who wasn't there—eh? Why, what, in the name of goodness—why, Erle, what has happened?"

This last interrogation fell from the speaker's lips, as, coming into the light of the reading lamp, its rays fell upon the face of Erle, who had seated himself in an easy-chair close by the table.

"Why, what in the world is the matter with you?"

Erle sat with his elbows on his knees, and his face buried in his hands.

"Speak man; what is it?"

"I—I can't—tell you," Reginald replied, in hoarse tones—"I'm—I'm choking."

"Can't—can't tell—choking!" said Campbell, in great amazement, and thinking at the moment of burnt feathers and sal volatile; for he fancied Erle was going to faint, he wore such a ghastly look.

"Come, say what is the matter with you," he continued. Then seizing his lamp with a sudden grip, he held it so that the light fell on Erle's face, while he looked wonderingly at his visitor.

"Erle, Erle, you're not—you haven't had—"

"No, no—not that," he replied, in the same hoarse tones.

"You are ill," cried Campbell, becoming alarmed.

"Ill! I wish I was past all illness, Campbell."

"Good heavens, Erle!" Campbell exclaimed.

"I have been—" he began, but the words seemed to choke him.

"Been what?"

"In—sulted—"

"How—by whom?" said Campbell, interrupting Erle, in his haste to know the catastrophe that had produced so alarming a result.

"By Mortimer—at the boat supper—he—"

"Boat supper; he—did what?" demanded Campbell, again interrupting his young friend's account of what had happened.

"Called—me—before all the men—a—" said Erle, slowly and painfully, in a voice scarcely above a whisper.

"Stop, stop, stop!" Campbell exclaimed, holding his outstretched hands towards Erle. "Tell me no more. I know. I guess the whole."

Much agitated at witnessing Erle's distress and prostration, Mr. Campbell did not address him again for some minutes, but put away the quarto "Plato" he had been reading into its place in his bookcase.

"That villain, Brady," he said, thinking aloud. "Master and servant, well matched—well matched."

Presently he said to Erle, "Charles Mortimer was intoxicated, I'm sure, or he never could have acted in such a way."

Reginald made a motion of assent.

Campbell, fidgeting on his chair, said to himself—"The tippy little coward; why—why his uncle Harold would whip him if he heard it. If—if he were a year or two younger I'd thrash him myself. But what good would it do him or this poor boy if we both did. Ah, dear! well-a-day! well-a-day!"

After sitting in silence for a short time, Erle made a strong effort to command himself, and was so far successful as to be able to speak to Campbell in a voice more like his own. He made some apology for keeping his friend up.

"Don't think of me," he said, in reply to this remark of Reginald's; "I am consider-

ing what it will be best to do in this sad matter."

"To do—when?" Erle asked, vacantly.

"In the morning."

"Do not trouble about the morning," he answered.

"There will be no difficulty in making him apologize. He will rue his rash language more than I can tell you. I know him," said Campbell, shaking his head gently. "I know him. I had them both together—Malton and he. Malton is the very soul of generosity, and would not hurt anybody for worlds; but Charles was always selfish, vain as vanity, and passionate beyond measure if his designs were thwarted. But," he added, "I could not have believed he was capable of this, though he were drunk as a Helot."

"What good can apology do for me? What right have I to expect or receive an apology, if it were any good?" Erle asked.

"All the right in the world," said Campbell, warmly.

"Mortimer, as he says, apologizes to gentlemen. I suppose I have no claim to the name."

"Sir," said the Scotchman, opening his eyes very wide, "you have as much—possibly more—right to be called a gentleman than any other man I know. You—you are a gentleman."

"Not as the world sees," exclaimed Erle, bitterly. "Campbell, I asked myself why I was ever born. You know from my own lips," he continued, standing erect, and looking wildly at Campbell, "the miserable story of my life. You know the mystery about my birth, the good man who for charity nurtured me and adopted me as his own, who has been more than a father to me. You know how long I hesitated before I mixed with the men about me. You know the silent horror, the ever-present dread that at first rarely left me. You have this night seen that dire Nemesis overtake and crush me—for ever."

"Don't talk in that desponding way," returned Campbell, in a vain effort to display some ray of hope; "although serious enough in all truth, this is not so serious a matter as to crush you beneath its weight. In the morning, Mortimer—"

"Will not see me," said Erle; "I shall not be here in the morning."

"Not be here?" demanded Campbell, in surprise.

"Not be here," answered Erle. "Some

men might forget—might face their acquaintances without a blush; I never can. I would rather die—though that is saying little; death has no terror—than meet the men I know."

"Think of your prospects of a brilliant degree, a fellowship."

"I want neither—now."

"But," urged Campbell, "do, pray, be calmer. Think of the result of sacrificing—"

"My sacrifice is made," said Erle.

"Don't talk of leaving Cambridge," his friend continued.

Erle made a gesture of dissent.

"Well, well! you will hear me after time has dulled the potency of the poison that rankles in your wound. Time, healer of all sorrows, will do what I cannot." After a pause, he added, "and where would you go?"

"To a new and better country, where all are equal."

This was said in a tone of such deep despair that Campbell felt considerable alarm for Reginald's safety.

"My heart within my breast is sad for you, my friend, to-night," he said.

Shortly after, linking his arm in his, he led him to his own room. As they walked along the cloisters the clock struck three; and the moonbeams waned and paled before the brighter light of day.

Campbell stayed with him until he was in a calmer and more reasonable frame of mind; and, having seen him remove his coat and waistcoat as a preliminary to retiring to his bed, judged it prudent to return and leave him to himself.

A minute or two after Campbell had left the room Erle saw the Doctor's letter lying on his table, and listlessly took it up and broke the seal. It contained the usual account of the household in Bartholomew-square, and other little items of news which Dr. Gasc thought might interest Reginald. The last few sentences were the important part of the letter.

"I am sorry," said the Doctor, "to have some bad news to tell you. You have seen here, at different times, a M. Schneider, a friend of Lavelle's. At his earnest request, and on his advice, years ago, I moved my little fortune from the hands of an old-fashioned house of bankers, who long had acted for my family. The security in which I invested it, at Schneider's proposition, is now, I find, worthless. I am old and ruined,

but I have no care for myself, it is for you and Madam I am grieved. Write."

This startling piece of intelligence roused Reginald from his state of lethargy. He forgot his own trouble, for the moment, in his anxiety for his best of friends. He read the Doctor's short and unimpassioned sentences again.

"How like him!" he said, "how unselfish, how calm is his generous nature under such a trying calamity. How selfish I have been; how unworthy of him!"

Indeed, owing to the disinterested but unfortunate advice of his acquaintance, M. Schneider, ruin stared Dr. Gasc in the face; and at his age it was no easy task to begin again to toil at his professional labours, nor with his tastes was the prospect of abandoning all his favourite pursuits a pleasant one. He had spent a long time and a great amount of zeal and earnestness upon the production of a comprehensive work upon the various branches of geological science, and had intended to make the completion and publication of it the chief work of his declining years.

The effect of the perusal of the Doctor's letter upon Erle was of a very salutary kind. His thoughts, diverted for the time from brooding over his own trouble, resumed something more like their common current. Although painful recollections of the wound he had so lately received recurred at frequent intervals to his mind, still he was now more absorbed in the consideration of the catastrophe that had overtaken his dear friend and guardian than he was in thinking over his own wrongs. He occupied himself in speculations about the Doctor's future and his own, as, without having done more towards undressing than throw off his coat and waistcoat he betook himself to his bed. For a time he lay restless and unquiet, tossing to and fro on his mattress; but at length, with the bright rays of the morning sun shining upon his pillow, he fell into a light and uneasy slumber.

But a few yards from the spot where Reginald lay in his first troubled sleep, with torn gown, disordered clothes, untied cravat, and most unsteady gait, the figure of a young man might have been seen advancing at a rapid pace—half walk, half run—along a narrow and winding passage shut in by high walls. It was the closely confined lane or footpath that divided the grounds of Tudor on the one side from those of an adjoining

college on the other. The figure pursued its way to the end of this path, which emerged upon the stone bridge that, at this spot, is thrown across the river, one end abutting on the college buildings. Here Mortimer, for it was he, paused for an instant to look around, then began to scale the side of the bridge.

Awaking from his imperfect sleep in that apprehensive mood in which a man wakes after a frightful dream, Erle was attracted by a peculiar scraping noise which fell distinctly on his ear. He had in his dream seen Mortimer by his side, and heard his insult ringing in his ears; he was about to make one great effort to rid himself of his presence when he awoke, with quick pulse, dry tongue, and his whole body in a violent perspiration. He threw off some of the bed clothes, and tried again to compose himself for sleep, when the rattling, scraping noise was repeated, and this time nearer to him than before. He listened with attention. The noise continued: nearer and nearer it came. Short and quick Reginald drew his breath, half rising from his bed. Step by step the sound approached till it was close upon him. A dark shadow fell across his window. A dark figure was between him and the light. In another instant the face of Charles Mortimer met his gaze. Deadly pale, and still evidently intoxicated, he quickly passed the window, and tried a window in the next set of rooms. It was shut. He began his ascent to the first floor windows, one of which was a little way open. Erle could hear each step sounding on the pieces of iron grating to which he clung, as he advanced on his perilous attempt. Then he heard the window slowly and cautiously pushed up. The next instant there was a sudden and loud splash in the water below. Mortimer had fallen into the river, and could not swim.

Erle sprang up from his bed. The man he had such cause to hate—the man who had robbed him, wronged him, ruined him—lay helpless beneath him. Unless speedy rescue came he was in his grave, and Erle alone of all the world knew of his danger. The dark whispering of passion in his ear was, "Let him die and be avenged." But the voice of humanity spoke too—"Your fellow-man struggles for life, save him." It is the "touch of nature that makes all the world kin." The Good in Erle's nature triumphed, without a second of hesitation,

over what there might be in him of the spirit of Evil. He threw up the window, mounted the ledge, and, having descried his enemy battling for life with the waters a few yards from the spot where he stood, he plunged courageously into the dark tide.

SPELLING.

THE Philological Society has announced its intention of shortly bringing forward for discussion the subject of English spelling reform. Nineteen out of twenty who are told this will very likely exclaim, "Spelling! I know how to spell already. Did we not all learn it in infancy? It is the very first step we make into the realms of literature. The first lesson we give a child is in spelling. The first book we put into his hands is a spelling-book. When we want to describe a very ignorant person, we say he cannot even spell." All this is quite true; yet how many of us are there who, even in our weary age, have attained that firm resting-place aspired to by Milton's Penseroso, "where we may sit and *rightly spell*," and prove to the satisfaction of ourselves and others that we do so? We learn to spell as we learn to walk and talk, by imitating others, not on any principle; and this is found to answer well enough for the ordinary purposes of life. Most persons of a certain education and social condition do, therefore, spell tolerably well, as long as they do not think about it; but when called upon to give a reason for their faith, or to defend it against an attack from without, they would usually be puzzled by the challenge. Spelling is so arbitrary a matter, and admits of so much difference of opinion, the standard is so shifting and variable, that the most conscientious student can sometimes find nothing better to refer to than mere precedent. Yet, since as fashion changes in this as in other things—gradually and almost imperceptibly—during the transition two or more ways of spelling the same word often obtain almost to an equal extent. Which of these is the right way? Now that competitive examination is the door to all public careers, and spelling one of the subjects to be mastered, the question becomes important. A candidate may be turned back, or denied his marks in this elementary acquirement, simply because he happens to differ in opinion from his examiner. For example: a fashion has been

gaining ground of late, but has hardly definitively established itself, of spelling such words as *honor*, *favor*, exactly as in Latin; whereas all our best dictionaries and classic authors insert a *u*, as *favour*, *honour*. An equally good defence may be set up for either. A. says, "All the best writers in the language spell it with *u*." "That is obsolete," says B.; "modern use decides for *or*. Besides, the word is derived from Latin." "I do not deny that," replies A.; "but it has come to us through the French *honneur*, as is shown by the accent laid on the last syllable in early English. I hold by old precedent." In the same way the final *k*—now dropt by common consent from words like *frantic*, *fantastic*, *heretic*, &c.—may be vindicated by an appeal to the Greek, in which the *k* occurs, or objected to on the ground that we took them from the Latin, which has no *k*. That, in fact, these words came to us directly from the French is hardly to be doubted, as in earlier days the last syllable invariably took the form *ique*. Any clever or perverse pupil, who was determined to turn the flank of his teacher, might easily drive him into a corner, whence his only escape would be by the *ipse dixit* of absolutism, or by the appeal to custom. But then comes the question, what *is* custom? How long a time must it have existed, and under what conditions, to render it a fair referee?—a question as unanswerable as that of Horace concerning the seven years prescribed as the ripening time of a poem. Like cases in equity, each one stands on its own merits. What length of time, for example, and what amount of general acceptance, decides the claim of a new or a slang word for admission into our dictionaries? *Starvation* and *capability*—introduced, it is said, respectively by Dundas and by Brown the landscape gardener—took their place at once in our tongue, while many a word as good and better has had to retire, or has succumbed after a short struggle for existence; and others have only made good their hold by a protracted fight. There was a time when no abbreviation of *perwig* or *mobile* would have been permitted in a dictionary or in any serious work: the use of either nowadays would be pedantic and ridiculous—*mob* and *wig* being as firmly fixed in their place as *cab* and *bus* bid fair to become instead of *cabriolet* and *omnibus*. The same thing applies to spelling; and this is one of the many difficulties in the way of

erecting a standard by which all shall be measured.

Up to a certain point—that is, as long as they are guided by pure empiricism—we find women spell better than men. Young ladies of the same standing in society would be ashamed to spell as badly as many of their contemporaries in the household brigade. Indeed, they are commonly referred to as authorities by their brothers and cousins in orthographical difficulties. A young lady, coming into the room one day when her brother and a friend were laboriously concocting a somewhat solemn epistle, was eagerly appealed to—"How do you spell grateful?" "G-r-e-a-t f double-o l," said the saucy girl. "There! I told you!" cried the friend, triumphantly. It would hardly be possible to find in the letter of a well-bred girl of twelve or thirteen such a sentence as we have seen with our own eyes in that of an Eton boy of the same class. "We had a *bote rase yesterday*. It was *orferly goyly*. I am your *afekshunate sun*." But, in matters of orthography, the woman who deliberates is lost. As soon as a doubt arises in her mind—unless she has a book to refer to—she is starless and rudderless. Having usually no Greek or Latin from which to reason, she has no guide but her own rapid perceptions and retentive memory; and, indeed, the majority of both sexes find themselves in the same position. Even etymology will not always lead them into the right path. We have, in fact, no rules for spelling.

The sort of aptness and readiness of observation which leads to a tolerable uniformity in spelling of the same period, we should expect to find more developed among the French than the English; but the fact is otherwise. It was the remark of a Frenchman of letters of high standing—who is almost as conversant with our language and manners as with those of his own country—that, while the educated portion of our people are less well instructed on the whole than the French in their mother-tongue, the illiterate English spell much better than the same class in France. We do not mean to assert that we have not private individuals among us in plenty who yield to none in the originality and independence of their orthography. The celebrated ostler's bill:—

To an os arf a da	s. d.
A gctin onimoam	10 0
	1 0
	11 0

and also the curious composition sent in by a carpenter:—

To a wooden box and a <i>wooden</i>	s. d.
[wouldn't] do	7 0
To a wooden box and a <i>wood</i>	
[would] do	7 0
Total	7 0

are hard to beat; as is the charwoman's claim to payment for "skewering the stars;" while, as a specimen of concise phonetic spelling, *y t n* for *whiting*, in the same bill, is highly meritorious. But in this country we do not see such audacious mis-spellings, deliberately painted on signboards or notifications, as are common in France; neither do our painters begin their work entirely at haphazard, and without measurement, so as to be obliged to squeeze in the last two or three letters in diminutive size, looking as if they were whispered. We remember to have seen, in the course of an afternoon walk in the neighbourhood of a large French town, the simple announcement of a piece of land for sale varied, in the most ingenious manner, six different ways:—"Terrain à vendre," "Térain à vendre," "Terrin," "Tairain," and all imaginable changes rung on the three words. Such a thing could not be seen now in England, though a tradition is still preserved in antique scrap-books of a handbill once exhibited in the windows of a lodging-house in Edinburgh—"Hay sack and flour to let: chicken and carret."

But, setting aside such utterly barbarous compositions as the above, a great many words in everyday use are both spelt and pronounced unquestionably in a wrong manner; and yet, like squatters on a common, have been allowed to remain so long unchallenged as to have become very difficult of ejection. From indolence and slovenliness, we are in the habit of allowing mis-spellings and mis-pronunciations to be forced upon us by the ignorant and illiterate: they are the majority, and we find it easier and more convenient to speak their tongue than to impose our own upon them; thus obeying the law of deterioration which seems to attend all earthly things. The tendency to *mincing*, which is a characteristic of the vulgar, has given us such words as *window* for *windoor*, *tureen* for *terrine*, *potato* and *grotto* for *palata* and *grotta*. The notion prevalent among the uneducated that a final *s* always denotes the plural, has led to the clipping of foreign words like *Xeres*—in old times written

Sherrie in English—*merinos*, *reps*, into *sherry*, *merino*, *rep*. In the same way, *bak-sheesh*, the cry of the Christmas morrice or Moorish dancers, anglicised into *boxes*, has become (Christmas) *box*. The transposition of letters—both consonants and vowels—common with those who spell only by ear, has been the cause of many variations and alterations of spelling in all languages. We may instance—board, broad; bird, brid; shrieve, sheriff; filmsy, flimsy; and these permutations have often left us two ways of spelling the same word, especially in proper names—as Bridlington, Burlington; Cheshurst, Chislehurst—one etymological, the other phonetic.

Different notions of the representation of sounds produce such varieties as *cloke*, *cloak*; *plain*, *plane*, &c.; but even if it were possible to reduce all these to a common denomination, it may be doubted whether such a consummation would be desirable. When a word—though it be really one and indivisible—has come to be used in different senses, it is a convenience to have a diversity in the mode of spelling in order to distinguish them. The *Times* newspaper has lately taken to spell *cheque*, *check*. Nothing is gained by this, and something is lost; for, while in that particular sense of a call on a banker it always was spelt *cheque*, there was no doubt on anyone's mind at first sight what it meant, whereas now the reader has to gather it from the context, and may even then be left in uncertainty. To be consistent, the *Times* should adopt the *checkers* of old inn signboards in place of *exchequer*. A cognate word is *draft*, which, though identical with *draught*, is never supposed to signify either a current of air, a drink, or a pull, but always to refer to something drawn up on paper, as draft of a deed, draft on a banker, &c. *Antique* and *antic*, again, have in the course of time come to mean different things; and it would be actually robbing us of a word—or, at least, of a method of expression—to insist upon our accepting either one or the other only, and writing of the *antiques* of a pantomime clown, or the *antic* towers of Windsor.

These variations are, however, defensible only so far as both ways of spelling leave the origin of the word clear; such as obscure and disfigure it must never be allowed. For example, the noun-substantive *spill* is defined by Johnson, "A shiver of wood or metal." *Spillikin* is its diminutive, and,

therefore, the appropriate name given to a child's toy consisting of small shivers of wood, bone, or ivory; but ignorant tradesmen now print the name *spellican*—*spell I can't* would be more to the purpose—thereby losing both meaning and derivation. This is quite inadmissible; and yet it is not easy to see how such abuses can be checked. Mr. Arnold would be for applying his favourite panacea of an Academy; but no court of arbitration will avail, unless the public will take the trouble to appeal to it; and indifference on the subject is unfortunately the rule, and not the exception. Few people care whether they speak, write, and spell correctly or not, as long as they make themselves understood. They are like a lady who was told that rinderpest, being a German word, ought not to be pronounced *ri-nderpest*. "I hear a great many people call it *ri-nderpest*," was her answer, and would be thought quite a sufficient defence by the multitude. Right or wrong was a matter of unconcern to her, as it is to most women, from the general want of anything like accuracy in their education. What other people do—*genteel* people being always *subauditâ*—is the rule of conduct given a woman; and, being imitative and quick of observation, it often stands her in good stead; but what a broken reed to lean upon!

Is it possible to awaken a desire for a better and more stringent authority?—that is the first question. In the majority of cases, we fear not. Modern ideas of education, while enlarging somewhat the measure of instruction for women, seem to tend towards reducing that of men to the same limit. Accurate scholarship is day by day falling into more disrepute. The clamour for education is *for the means of making money*. The universities are called upon, not to plough, but to sow; not to prepare young men for self-cultivation and enlightenment, but to send them out ready immediately to bring their superficial acquirements to market; and rough and ready methods will be increasingly acceptable. Dean Swift justly observes that "One cause that hath maimed our language is a foolish opinion that we ought to spell exactly as we speak." To adopt this as a rule would be at once to break down all landmarks, and throw the history of the English tongue to the dogs; but no power on earth can prevent its being done to a certain extent. No man of culti-

vated mind can live thirty or forty years in the world without observing the alterations which are always gradually but persistently creeping into phraseology and pronunciation; and we shall doubtless continue to modify our spelling accordingly, as we have done hitherto. In some cases it is the pronunciation which adapts itself to the spelling, as we see in the growing inclination to pronounce *er ur*, instead of *ar* like our forefathers, who made *person parson, merchant marchant*. This fashion we still retain in *Hartfordshire, Darby*—probably in the next generation to be called *Durby* and *Hurts*, a change which has already taken place in Jersey, called *Jarsey* a century ago by all, as it is still by many seafaring men. Again, the hurry and bustle of modern life lead us more and more to the curtailing, not only of sentences, but of words. *Through* and *though*, for example, are not uncommonly written *thro'*, *tho'*; the next step will be to leave out the apostrophe, and there is at once a new orthography, which we shall be driven to adopt sooner or later.

The difficulty of preserving the boundaries of a language like ours, spreading every day among new peoples and under new conditions of life, is almost insurmountable. The time will come, very likely, when the languages spoken by the inhabitants of North America, the Australasian countries, and others of our stock, will differ from that of the United Kingdom, as Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian do from each other and from their parent Latin. But that is no reason why an effort should not be made to check the licence of neologism and neography; and in these days, when mere utility is more regarded than grace or beauty of style, we may be thankful that such an association as the Philological Society exists to undertake this sort of literary work. On what principle they will proceed to form anything like a consistent system of orthography, we are, however, at a loss to anticipate.

Modern English may be said to have commenced its formation in the fourteenth century. In its long course it has drawn to itself, as befits the commercial nation of which it is the exponent, supplies from all peoples and all countries. These it has adapted and remoulded to its use, giving them a new form, as Shakspeare did with the stories of Plutarch and Boccaccio; and discrepancies have crept in which it would be impossible to get rid of now. In words of

unquestionable Greek descent, which we have long assimilated and made our own—like *fancy, fame, frenzy, fantastic*—we have, for example, taken *f* as the representative of *ph* in the original; while in those of later introduction, especially if they be technical terms, we stick to the parent form and use *ph*, as in *physic, phrenology, photograph*. To call upon us at this time of day to recur to etymological rules, and spell the former words *phansy, phame, phrenesy*, would be foolish and unavailing. They, and many others, must abide with us in the form given them when they were naturalized. Etymology cannot, therefore, be set up as an unerring guide and a last appeal in all cases; and, even if it could, there would remain the question how far we must remount towards the source before deciding on the true one. No philologist of modern times regards Greek as a root language. How much farther back into the Aryan or Semitic families should we have to go for our authority, while the luckless word waited for its English clothing, like poor Marie Antoinette shivering with bare shoulders till the right lady of the court arrived to give her her shift? On the other hand, as it can never be certain that everybody is of the same opinion as to the notation of sound, the phonetic principle cannot suffice us, even if there were not graver objections to its adoption. All we can hope for is a tolerably fair compromise between theory and practice.

We have a noble inheritance in a literature now five centuries old, comprising writers as great as any the world has seen, in a language which has grown under their auspices into one unmatched among modern tongues for vigour, richness, and variety, simple in construction, tuneful and manageable from its diversity of accent. By all means let us do our best endeavour to keep this well of English undefiled. It has been too long and too entirely neglected; its hedge has been taken away, and its wall broken down, and it is getting choked with briars. Let us fence it and gather out the stones thereof, and make it flow bright and clear again. But it must be let *to flow*. It is a stream, not a tank. Adaptability is one of its best characteristics, and that which makes English a living, not a dead, language. Only let us watch over its course and keep its embankments, as far as in us lies, in good repair.

MISSED THE PIGEON AND HIT THE CROW.

“SMASH her nose this time—let her have it full on the tip. Ah, very near indeed, but it caught her on the eye. Try again. A little too low that time—damaged her mouth. See if you cannot hit just between the last two places. Ah, brava! bravissima!”

Are we in St. Giles's? Oh, dear, no. At Wapping, then? By no means. We are on the pretty lawn appertaining to No. 10, Aladdin Park. Will you have some champagne cup? The hospitable Brewer is bringing out a fresh supply—see—in an elegant cut-glass jug. It really looks tempting, this hot afternoon. Observe the bubbles, sparkling up from pinky depths, clustering round the floating lumps of ice, clinging to the graceful strip of cucumber. Excuse me, I must take a tumbler of it to that lady in lavender sitting under the verandah. She lives at No. 3 of these same villas, and I am her favourite nephew, staying with her from the Saturday to the Monday. She is very good to me, and may, after her decease, be better; and she likes little attentions.—[N.B. The present tense was tried in hopes of being graphic; but, as it is troublesome, we will use the perfect, if you please.]

“Delicious!” said my aunt. “Thank you, Harry; set it down on that little table, please. That is a dreadfully vulgar game they are playing on the lawn, yonder. No, I do not mean the croquet, or the lawn billiards—they are simply idiotic—that other game. Dreadful!”

My kind relative's name is Sarah, and her nephews and nieces often address her, unrebuked, by the more affectionate synonym. Therefore, to set up an effigy resembling the spear-borne head of an Ashantee queen decapitated in some negro revolution, to stick a common clay tobacco pipe in the place where her royal nose—barbarously torn off for the sake of its jewelled ring—once spread, and then to call it “Aunt Sally,” and proceed to throw sticks at it, jarred on her feelings like an act of personal disrespect.

“Dreadful!” I echoed.

“To see that great gawk, whom they were applauding just now, throw the stick, was disgusting. And look at that simpering thing who is going to the other extreme,

and pretending to have no more strength in her arm than an unweaned baby—I have no patience! What are mothers made of? If I had daughters they should not lower themselves like that, either.”

I cannot honestly express a personal wish that my dear aunt had married, and had a family; but such an arrangement would have been a great public benefit—her children must have turned out patterns for a generation to be shaped by.

“It all comes of education,” said I. And if you ask me what I meant, I am dumb; but that little formula always pleases my aunt, so I invariably use it when I do not know what other safe observation to make.

“Le gras and archery were the garden amusements of my young days,” said my aunt, “and there was something elegant and refined about those pastimes; but now cudgels and tobacco-pipes are considered the proper toys for young ladies to handle. I declare, if they have not persuaded my little neighbour, Lucy Summer, to join their low romps! I would not have believed it of her.”

“I suppose it would hardly do for her to refuse to join the party if they asked her—the Brewers have taken great pains, and she is afraid of seeming hard to please,” said I, diplomatically, knowing well that Miss Summer liked the game she graced as much as anybody. And she discharged the missiles at Aunt Sally's fragile nose with an elegance which threw a halo of refinement over the entire performance—not hurling them with visible effort, but manly force, like Miss Boy Thomas—or tossing them about two yards, with a little affected jump, like Miss M. Meely—but using her right arm in a manner at once feminine and free.

This was not my first Saturday to Monday visit to Aladdin Park. My aunt lived at No. 3, Mr. Summer at No. 2; and the paling which divided the two gardens was not high. So it fell out that I often held romantic converse with Lucy. There was a certain similarity about our tastes and positions in the world which created sympathy between us. She liked gooseberries—I liked gooseberries; and we compared samples over the paling. She lived with an uncle—I stayed sometimes with an aunt. Startling coincidences these, which almost made one's blood thrill. The mysterious hand of fate had some evident purpose in thus drawing us together. I remember making that

remark, and she said "Yes," quite placidly: so I suppose my words had some meaning—though I have no notion what, unless it was intended that she was very pretty and attractive, and I liked gossiping with her over the paling. That style of flirtation seemed best suited to both of us. We never got on half so well when we met on ordinary terms, without an emboldening partition-wall. Perhaps Pyramus and Thisbe would have stammered platitudes about the weather, and contented themselves with a bashful hand-shaking, if the wild beast had not poked his nose in, and prevented their meeting at "Ninny's tomb."

Lucy's uncle, Mr. Summer, reminded one somewhat of a hare. He was a small man, with a wiry body, which gave promise of agility, and—have you ever heard a race-horse described as "quick on his legs?"—well, Mr. Summer gave one the impression that, if need were, *he* could be quick on his legs. His face denoted great timidity: when in repose, there was an air about him of listening for the hounds; and every now and then he would raise his nose, as if sniffing the enemy in the wind; while at any sudden noise he would start, and turn his large, round, prominent eyes in the direction from which it came, as much as to say, "Here they are!"

While my aunt and myself were yet contemplating his niece, he came up to us in a greater tremble and with larger eyes than usual.

"Dreadful, dreadful, is it not? We shall all be murdered in detail, house by house! They tried No. 7 last night, but rang a bell attached to one of the shutters, and so gave the alarm to Mr. Jones, who happened to be sitting up late."

"Bless me, Mr. Summer!" cried my aunt, "you don't mean burglars?"

"Yes, Miss Cingle, I do mean burglars; doubtless the same gang that stripped No. 1 so completely—from the plate to the umbrellas—and finished up with supper in the kitchen before they departed."

"The same gang, Mr. Summer? Would they dare to revisit the neighbourhood only a fortnight afterwards?"

"Yes, Miss Cingle, they would. I have made burglars my peculiar study, and that is their audacious custom. You take great interest in your apiary, and are probably aware that when robber bees have once tasted the honey in a strange hive they will

return again and again in spite of all risks. Well, housebreakers appear to have a similar instinct."

"But are you sure there was any attempt made last night at all? Bells sometimes slip."

"Madam," said Mr. Summer, solemnly shaking his head, "on opening the shutter, Mr. Jones found that the window had been drawn up."

"But perhaps it had been left so. Servants are so careless!"

"Would there were any such loophole for hope! I have myself seen the impress of boots upon the flower-bed—large, brutal boots, with great nails in them—such boots as the villains kick their wives and other victims to death with."

"Dear me," said my aunt; "the police ought to be communicated with."

"That has been done," replied Mr. Summer, despondently; "but it is not of the slightest use. However, it will be a satisfaction to our friends, when we lie on a bloody bier, to know that all precautions have been taken. On that account I mean to exercise, and I recommend to my neighbours, increased vigilance. Every practicable entrance to the house ought to be firmly secured the last thing at night—not that it is possible to keep burglars out if they are determined to effect an entrance, the instruments they employ in their nefarious craft have been too highly perfected for that—but, as I said, for satisfaction, to avoid self-reproach, just as we call in a physician when a case is hopeless."

"What dreadful times we live in, to be sure!"

"We do, indeed, Miss Cingle."

"It is all the march of intellect," said I; "for though my dear aunt's will is made, there are such things as codicils." And here I killed two birds with one stone; for Lucy's uncle smiled and nodded approvingly; and I followed up the favourable impression my words made upon him by fetching him, too, some champagne cup; and then, being called away to take part in croquet, I left my aunt and Mr. Summer to indulge in what cheerful anticipations they liked, and proceeded to exercise my talent of ingratiation in another quarter, by nursing Miss Lucy's ball through a protracted game—thereby, as she was a nominal adversary, exciting great wrath amongst the members of my own side. But it is impossible, with the best intentions, to please everybody.

I told my charmer what our relatives under the verandah were talking about, and asked if she were afraid of thieves.

"No," she replied, "I am quite hardened. My poor uncle is always in a state of dread about something or another. One day it is earthquakes, another, fire—then he anticipates an English edition of the French Revolution—then an invasion. All last autumn he was in momentary dread lest the whole earth should go rushing off into the sun, so that I have become so used to the cry of 'wolf!' that I don't think I am afraid of anything—except spiders."

"I do not wonder at his nervousness when he has such a treasure under his care."

"What treasure?" asked Lucy, looking down at her tootsicums.

"Spoons!" cried Miss Boy Thomas, who was standing nearer than I knew of.

When the party broke up, and I took my aunt home, I found that she was, to a considerable extent, affected by Mr. Summer's conversation. She spoke of her unprotected condition; of the relief it was to have me sleeping in the house; and of how she wished that I could reside with her permanently—which was not a feasible plan. I suggested that she should indulge in a manservant; and she said that she had already had that idea, but Mr. Summer had painted the probability of her engaging a disguised member of the gang—a burglar in footman's clothing—in such vivid colours, that the motion had been lost without a division. I next proposed investment in a dog; and, as her ingeniously timid neighbour had met this comfort also with the assertion that the pacification of those faithful animals with drugged meats was the first lesson learned by every tyro in housebreaking, I promised to get her a small bulldog, of fierce disposition but drawing-room dimensions, who might live in the house, and remain always under her own eye; and the prospect of possessing such a guardian soothed her fears to a considerable extent.

Of course my aunt had no smoking-room in her house; but, as she was a large-hearted lady, she allowed me to have my pipe in the kitchen after the servants had gone to bed, and even directed seltzer and sherry to be put out for my use on such occasions. I was enjoying these comforts and a book that night, when I thought I heard a voice; and, listening attentively, distinguished my name called in a loud whisper.

"Harry!" and then again, "Harry!"

"Yes, aunt," I replied, in the same midnight tones, and going to the door; "what is the matter?"

"I am sure I heard a noise in the garden."

This was highly probable, as the cats belonging to Aladdin Park are remarkably numerous, adventurous, and turbulent; and for their repression, indeed (though he said it was for the rabbits), the gardener kept a gun constantly loaded, which he brought into the house at night; and there it now stood, behind the eight-day clock, in a corner of the kitchen.

"I will go round and see what it is," said I—in brave defiance of the feline race, as represented at least in England.

"Take care, they will murder you. Oh, no; I can never consent to your going out!"

"I will take Timothy's gun with me."

"Eh? Well, that is different; and it would be satisfying to know if anyone's there. I dare say it is all my fancy."

"We will soon see," said I, pushing back the top bolt of the front door—for I was in the hall by this time, and able to distinguish something white, from which my aunt's voice proceeded, on the first landing.

"Stop!" she now exclaimed; "they will rush in through the unfastened door while you are at the other end of the garden!"

"I'll put the chain up after him," said another voice.

"Oh, cook, how you made me jump!" cried my aunt. "But won't you be afraid?"

"Not I, mum."

So it was arranged. I went out with the gardener's gun, heard the chain put up behind me, and proceeded to make a tour of inspection round the shrubbery. Cats, scratching up the flower-beds, fled before me; rabbits, nibbling the precious shoots, scuttled away in the moonlight; but no more formidable depredators were anywhere visible; and I was on the point of returning indoors, when my attention was attracted by something on the premises adjoining.

The wing of Mr. Summer's house next to ours had been an enlargement—an afterthought—and was a story lower than the rest of the building; and on the roof of this new part I could distinctly see a figure, very much larger than that of any cat, crawling along, and peeping down the skylight which covered what, in the days of a

former and more dissipated tenant, had been a billiard-room.

Poor Mr. Summer! His fears, then, had not been entirely fanciful; and his house had really been selected as a proper field for burglarious enterprise. It would be enough to frighten him into a state of idiotcy to be roused from his slumbers by a villain with crape mask and pistol. And Lucy! How fortunate that I had discovered the rascal before he effected an entrance. If I could only secure him cleverly, now, Mr. Summer would be bound, in common gratitude, to allow me to make love to his niece.

"Holloa, there!" I cried. "What are you doing on the roof of that house? Come down this instant, or I will shoot you. No; come down on the outside—the way you went up." For directly he heard my voice, the fellow seized the skylight and commenced raising it, evidently intending to enter the house.

"I declare I'll fire, if you do not come away from there," I persisted, seeing that he paid no attention. "Well, if you *will* have it: one, two, three"—explosion—crash—disappearance of burglar.

The gun could only be loaded with small shot, and at the distance he was off it was extremely improbable that he had received any fatal wound; but he might have broken his neck in falling through the skylight, or

"Cut his throat with a little bit of glass,"

like the gentleman in the ballad—for either of which calamities I could only be held partially responsible. But I thought more of the alarm of the family than the fate of the robber, and ran round to the front door of Mr. Summer's house with all possible speed.

There was a rare hullabaloo going on inside—Lucy and the three female servants must all have been screaming their best to produce the din, which for some time drowned the sound of my knocking and ringing. At last the door was partially opened—I was recognised by the housemaid, and requested to run for a doctor.

"Master's bleeding awful!" she explained.

"Your master! Mr. Summer?"

"O, yes, sir. He was going his rounds on the roof, a-looking for thieves, when some villain shot him with a gun, and he fell right through the skylight."

"Is—he—much—hurt?"

"Can't live a hower, I should say."

I rushed off to the house of the nearest surgeon, and, having seen him to Mr. Summer's door, returned to my aunt, who was curious and hysterical. It was a very meagre account that I gave her. I said that a gun had been fired, and Mr. Summer had been much alarmed, but it was all right now; and so coaxed her off to bed. And next morning, not caring to stand a cross-examination, I started off early, without my breakfast; nor have I dared to go near Aladdin Park since.

The housemaid was wrong, though—thank goodness! Her master not only lived "a hower," but he is alive now. Indeed, he was more frightened than injured—though that he certainly might well be, and yet receive considerable hurt. His first unpleasant experiences of the part of an amateur detective, and watchman and custodian of a whole row of villas, were not of such a character as to lead him to enter unnecessarily upon such a hazardous experiment in future.

His intentions were extremely good; though the result turned out to be so unfortunate for him—and me. Happily, however, the glass did not cut him very badly, and he did not fall to the ground, but saved himself by clutching at the ladder by which he had scrambled through the skylight. But, alas! seven No. 6 shots have been extracted from his person, and he knows that I fired them into it.

My own feelings after firing the ill-timed shot, and learning the unhappy fate of my Lucy's father, may be as easily imagined as described. I have vowed solemnly never to handle, use, or employ any dangerous weapon of any sort, kind, or description whatever again. The first lesson I ever had in burglar-catching has taught me more than enough of the art.

But what course is there now left for me to take? How can I ever venture to approach the neighbourhood of Aladdin Park again? How shall I ever summon courage enough to face my victim?

What can I do? He has taken no legal proceedings; but can he ever forgive me? Do you think that a very, *very* soft eider-down cushion would have any effect as a peace-offering?

And then my aunt is so angry, too. And Lucy? I have not had any communication with her yet.

CAUGHT BY A THREAD.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON their way to the Waterloo Station Mr. Bender showed no inclination to continue the conversation, and allowed Fenwick to walk a couple of paces in advance. As they reached the platform a train was on the point of leaving for Wilmington Heath, and they had scarcely entered an unoccupied carriage when the signal for departure was given. A man who hurried to the next carriage a moment after, and attempted to open the door, was prevented from carrying out his intention by the guard, who loudly called out that the train was in motion. Fenwick looked out of the window and saw that the disappointed passenger was Mr. Bentley Wyvern.

"It's surprising what strange things people will do for the sake of money," said Mr. Bender, after some minutes' silence. "There's my old guv'nor, that I always thought hadn't a shilling as I didn't know of, and yet he had saved up over a hundred pounds, which my wife happened to find yesterday, hid away behind some empty pickle-bottles in a cupboard. Lord! what a passion the old man was in when he was asked if the money belonged to *him*. I suppose he fancied I should ask him for some of it; but he ought to have known I'm not a greedy party in matters of that kind. Then there's this woman, Susan Harding, that pretends to be so fond of your father; but I needn't tell you that his money is all she wants."

"Is that her real name?"

"Well, it was before she was married."

"Married?"

"Yes; but her husband is no longer living."

"When did he die?"

"Within the last few months. But I had better wait till your father is present before I go into further particulars," replied Mr. Bender, as he took out his pocket-book and began to look over its contents.

Arrived at Wilmington Heath—across which masses of grey fog were stealing, silently and irresistibly as the advance of fate—the detective anticipated Fenwick's intention by stepping quickly forward and ringing the bell at the gate of the residence of Richard Towers.

"Is the captain at home?" asked Mr. Bender, when a servant appeared.

"Yes, he is; but—"

"And is Miss Harding in the house also?"

"Well, I believe they are both in the drawing-room; but—" added the man, hesitating, "I've received orders not to admit Mr. Towers."

"You put that three half-crown in your pocket, and say as this gen'lman and me have come on very partic'lar business."

The man took the money, and returned to the house, the door of which he left open.

"Now, you follow me, Mr. Towers," said the detective, as he walked rapidly in the direction taken by the servant. "I don't exactly know where the drawing-room is situated, but you'll be able to show me, I've no doubt."

"Under any other circumstances, I should have an insuperable objection to obtaining an interview with my father by means such as these," observed Fenwick, when he reached the hall.

"Which room are they in?" asked Mr. Bender, with a sudden display of impatience which surprised the young man.

Having received the requisite information, the detective quickly ascended the staircase, and, followed by Fenwick, entered the drawing-room at the moment when the servant was delivering the message to his master. Susan Harding, holding a newspaper in her hand, which she had been engaged in reading aloud, was seated near the fire. The servant rather hastily retired.

"What is the meaning of this intrusion?" asked Richard Towers, frowning.

Mr. Bender no longer appeared inclined to take the initiative, for he glanced at Fenwick, but made no reply.

"In spite of my remonstrances, you persist in your intention to make that woman your wife?" said Fenwick, pointing towards his father's housekeeper.

"If you dare to allude to her in that disrespectful manner," returned Richard Towers, his face colouring with passion, "my servants shall expel you from the house. I can easily understand why you are so anxious to prevent my marriage; but, even if it did not take place, I should take care that you were excluded from all benefit under my will."

"No such motive actuates my conduct. I have recently been left a large sum of

money, which is more than sufficient for all my wants."

"Is that really the case?" asked Richard Towers, looking incredulously at his son. "No relative of ours has died from whom you could inherit any property."

Fenwick briefly mentioned the acquaintance he had formed with Mr. Hurlston, and its result.

"The man must have been mad as a March hare," rejoined Richard Towers, sneeringly.

"And your son appears to have turned the old man's insanity to good account," remarked Susan Harding, who seemed to feel no embarrassment in the presence of Mr. Bender.

"Having heard what you have to say, Fenwick, I must now request you to leave the house," said Richard Towers. "Your appearance here is as disagreeable to Miss Harding as it is to me."

"You have not yet been made acquainted with the object of my visit."

"Have you ascertained where Fuller is to be found?"

"On the contrary, I have reason to believe that he has sailed for Australia."

"The scoundrel! Then he will escape me after all."

"Well, I did all I could, captain; but there's still a chance of getting hold of him, as it's not yet certain that the ship has sailed," said Mr. Bender.

"I think it would be much better not to take any further trouble about the man," observed Susan Harding, quietly.

"Oh, that's your opinion, is it?" said Mr. Bender, ironically.

"What do you mean by assuming that insolent tone when you address Miss Harding?" demanded Richard Towers, turning suddenly towards the detective and looking at him savagely.

"He means," interposed Fenwick, "that she has long since forfeited all right to be treated with that respect which you claim for her."

"The fact is, captain, this here woman is an old acquaintance of mine," said Mr. Bender, smiling cheerfully. "You've been a good deal deceived in her, I can see."

"In what respect?"

"In every respect," answered Mr. Bender, taking a step nearer to Susan Harding, and fixing his eyes upon her. "I met her in the City some time ago and made myself known

to her, but she pretended she had never seen me before that day."

She rose from her chair; and, though her face had become somewhat pale, she displayed no signs of trepidation as she confronted her accuser.

"What I told you on that occasion I repeat now. You are a stranger to me, and have mistaken me for someone else."

"Ah! You think that I've *still* some little doubt as to your identity; but you're quite wrong," said Mr. Bender. "I recollect you perfectly now, and so does one of the prison warders that I brought out here to look at you the other day. It's no use your denying it, Susan; you know as well as I do that you were transported about thirteen years ago. I apprehended you myself and was witness at the trial, the date of which I've got in this here pocket-book, along with something else which concerns you," he added, tapping the breast of his coat.

"It is false—quite false," she said, looking at the detective steadily; but her face had now overspread with a deathlike pallor.

"This is a terrible charge; and, if I find that it is unfounded, you shall be prosecuted for defamation of character," said Richard Towers, beginning to walk up and down the room.

"Much obliged to you for your kind intentions towards me, but I don't think as you'll have a chance of acting up to them," retorted Mr. Bender, dryly. "I heard you call this woman Miss Harding just now, so I suppose she has forgotten to tell you as she was married long before she saw you."

"I—I never heard of that circumstance before," stammered Richard Towers, glancing towards Susan Harding, across whose face a sudden spasm had just passed.

"I've a notion there's more than one circumstance connected with her past life which you don't know about," remarked Mr. Bender, approaching the fire and warming his hands for a moment, but availing himself of this proceeding as an excuse for getting still closer to the woman without attracting her attention.

"Do you mean to assert that her husband is still living?" asked Richard Towers.

"I have no husband," she said, speaking through her closed teeth.

"You had better be very careful as to what you say, because it's my duty to tell you that it may be used as evidence against you,"

said Mr. Bender, fixing his eyes upon her watchfully.

"I don't understand you," she replied, sinking upon the chair near which she had been standing. "Will you allow this man to insult me so grossly, Richard, without ordering him to leave the house instantly?" she continued, after a moment's pause.

"I fear you have deceived me, woman," replied Richard Towers, in a harsh voice.

"I *know* she has," said Mr. Bender, with emphasis; "and you may consider yourself very lucky that you've been told what she is in time to prevent your marrying her."

The dull, expressionless eyes of Susan Harding suddenly lit up with a ferocious gleam, and she clasped her hands tightly; but not a word escaped from her thin, colourless lips.

"I dare say, captain, you have heard of the murder of a gen'lman, named Mansfield, which took place some time 'ago at an insurance office in Lombard-street?" said Mr. Bender, still watching every movement of the woman, close to whom he was standing.

"Yes, yes; I remember reading the particulars of it in the newspapers; and, in fact, I once saw the unfortunate man about some shares which I had purchased in the Leviathan Company," replied Richard Towers.

"Well, this woman you were going to marry was his wife. He was very fond of her at one time; but, when she disgraced him by her dishonesty, he looked upon her as dead to him, and always went about dressed in the mourning of a widower. The very day I met her in the City, I saw her turn pale when a gen'lman with iron-grey hair and dressed in mourning passed close by her. I have now no doubt as to who he was, though of course at the time I hadn't any suspicion he was her husband."

"I shall leave you to continue your base falsehoods without my presence," said Susan Harding, rising from her chair.

"I'll take devilish good care you don't," cried Mr. Bender, seizing her by the wrist, and quickly forcing a handcuff upon it.

She wrenched herself free from his grasp for a moment, and struck him heavily across the face with her manacled hand. A brief struggle followed, and then a click told that her wrists were bound together.

"You had better sit down and compose yourself," said Mr. Bender, as he took out his handkerchief and applied it to a severe

cut on his cheek made by the iron. She did not speak, nor did she show any inclination to profit by this suggestion, but stood breathing hard, and with eyes glittering savagely.

"I assume that you know yourself to be justified in the course you are taking, and therefore I have not interfered," said Richard Towers, in a subdued voice.

"I've taken her into custody for the murder of her husband," answered Mr. Bender.

"And this is the woman that my father was about to marry!" exclaimed Fenwick, shuddering.

Richard Towers sat down heavily upon a couch, and covered his face with his hands. Distressed as he was at the prospect of its becoming known to the world that he had been on the eve of making a felon his wife, he was not less agitated by the humiliating consciousness that, with all his cunning, he had been egregiously deceived in the character of the woman; while his son, whom he affected to despise, had been able to estimate it much more correctly.

"What motive induced this wretched woman to kill her husband?" asked Fenwick, after a pause.

"I am innocent!" she cried, in a piercing voice.

"Of course you are till you're proved guilty," said Mr. Bender, grimly. "Well, sir, it's not very easy to explain motives in cases like this here; but, from all I've been able to ascertain, her husband had discovered as she was living in this house and was going to be married to the captain. No doubt Mr. Mansfield threatened to expose her character if she didn't leave her present situation and give up her designs on your father. That course didn't suit her plans for the future, so she made an appointment to meet her husband at his office one night when she knew he would be working late and alone. It was during that interview she shot him. Being an uncommon artful person, she left the pistol lying by the body, in the belief that people would suppose he had killed himself. For a long time I strongly suspected that a man whose name I won't mention had committed the crime. But I overheard a conversation between him and his brother, when they were standing under a railway arch one night, which inclined me to think I had made a mistake."

"Are you quite sure that this woman is

really the person you suppose?" inquired Richard Towers. "I remember that she had several excellent testimonials from people with whom she had lived when she applied for the situation of housekeeper here."

"Did you take any steps to ascertain if they were genuine?"

"No."

"Then I'm pretty certain they were forgeries. Susan aint partic'lar about a trifle of that sort when she has a purpose to serve."

"What led you in the first instance to suspect that this woman had committed the murder?" asked Fenwick.

Mr. Bender took out his pocket-book, opened it, and, producing a piece of paper, carefully unfolded it. Fenwick approached him, and saw that it contained a thread of wool. A closer inspection showed that it was dyed in alternate colours of violet and black.

"I found this sticking to the lock of the pistol," said Mr. Bender, holding up the thread between his finger and thumb. "My opinion at the time was, that, in taking out the weapon, it got entangled in some part of the man's dress; but it puzzled me to make out what part of the dress this thread was torn from, unless it might be from a muffler for the neck. Well, sir, when I came out here with Phil Gyves to watch for Susan's appearance, I saw her go out wearing a violet and black shawl made of wool. As I have said before, Phil recognised her at once, and reminded me of her name; but it was not till the next morning that I discovered she was the wife of Mr. Mansfield. Still it never occurred to me that she might have been guilty of his murder till I remembered the violet and black thread. Then all at once a suspicion came into my mind that she was the guilty party. Up to that time we hadn't been able to find out where the pistol had been purchased; but, as soon as we had reason to believe there was a woman in the case, by sending out a few thousand handbills, giving a description of her, we were not long in discovering where she had bought it."

The last words were not without their effect upon Susan, for her head drooped and her features suddenly contracted into an expression of pain.

"Remove her as quickly as possible, her presence sickens me," said Richard Towers.

Mr. Bender rang the bell, and a female servant appeared.

"This here lady is going out for a walk, so she'll trouble you to bring down her bonnet and shawl," he said, placing himself before Susan Harding, and by that means hiding her iron-bound wrists. When the servant returned he met her at the door of the room, and without allowing her to enter, took the articles from her. She quickly descended to the kitchen and held a consultation with the cook as to the meaning of so strange a proceeding. The cook was of opinion that something very mysterious was going on in the drawing-room, and they both agreed to watch for the appearance of Susan Harding.

Meanwhile, Mr. Bender put the bonnet on to his prisoner, and very carefully tied the ribbons into a becoming bow; then he placed the shawl upon her shoulders, and, having discovered a pin lying on the carpet, he fastened the shawl neatly in front. All this time she remained motionless, and with her eyes partially closed.

"Are you pretty comfortable?" he asked, in a low voice. "It's not the first time as I've acted the part of lady's maid, and it won't be the last I'm afraid."

She made no reply; but opened her eyes, and cast a wistful look towards the door.

"That woman has some rings on her fingers which I gave her," said Richard Towers. "Take them off; she has no longer any right to them."

In accordance with this request, Mr. Bender raised her manacled hands; but she suddenly closed them tightly.

"Now don't be foolish," said Mr. Bender, soothingly.

"They were his wife's, and therefore he is ashamed that I should continue to wear them," she said, laughing convulsively. "For that reason I won't part with them. I'll wear them on the scaffold, if I ever go there. Why don't you take him into custody also? He caused his wife's death. In one of his drunken fits he entered her bedroom when the doctor had said that her life depended upon her being kept quiet—entered her bedroom, I repeat, and frightened her to death by his violence towards his son. You know what I say is true," she went on, turning suddenly to Fenwick; "but you don't know that a few days before your mother's death he told her that he intended to marry me as soon as he became a widower. Dr.

Craven might well say that she had received a shock."

"Susan, you really are going on anyhow. Try to take things coolly," said Mr. Bender, holding up his hand in a deprecating manner.

"I have no more to say."

"Then come along," said Mr. Bender, taking her by the arm.

She walked firmly out of the room, and the door closed behind her and the detective.

"This is my last visit to you," said Fenwick, taking up his hat. "I leave you to reflect over what that miserable woman has just uttered. However bad she may be, I firmly believe that she has only spoken the truth in charging you with the most cruel conduct towards my poor mother."

An inarticulate sound came from the mouth of Richard Towers. He was struck with paralysis; and never recovered sufficiently to be able to move from his chair without assistance.

CHAPTER XVII.

SIX weeks after his marriage with Florence, Sir Charles Pennington returned from the Continent with her, and they took up their residence in Half Moon-street, where a furnished house had been taken for a few months. The prospect of speedily becoming a peeress and sharing an income of eighty thousand a-year kept Florence in the highest spirits, which she took no pains to repress. Before her marriage she had affected indifference as to the brilliant match she was about to make; but now she questioned her husband frequently as to the extent of the Bideford estates, where they were situated, how many country-seats there were, and how long a time must elapse ere they could take possession of all their wealth. One day, after a conversation of this kind, Florence expressed a desire to pay a visit to the rectory; and, accordingly, a brougham was hired from the neighbouring livery stables, and they went to Upfield. They found Mary and her father in the drawing-room. Florence, with great vivacity and considerable humour, gave them an account of the various places that she had visited during her stay in Paris.

"By the bye, Charles," said Mr. Clare, "have you seen Wyvern since your return? I fancy he is out of town, as he has not called here lately."

"No, I haven't seen him, but he sent me a note yesterday."

"Oh, I can easily understand why he has discontinued his visits," said Florence, glancing at her sister.

"But I can't understand why he has not answered a somewhat important letter which I sent to his house yesterday morning," said the rector, gravely.

"An important letter!" exclaimed Florence, laughing. "Why, what in the world have you been writing to him about? Has he been trifling with the affections of Mrs. Graves-Parr?"

"The fact is I am somewhat anxious to see him, in consequence of a report which has reached me relative to some shares that he advised me to purchase."

"I think you had better let Fenwick make some inquiries about them," said Mary. "He promised to call this afternoon."

"This is quite a surprise! I had no idea Fenwick Towers had resumed his visits," remarked Florence, looking at her father inquiringly.

"Oh, yes. Mary persisted in her determination to marry him; and, as he is now able to support her very comfortably, I have given my consent to their union. If I refused it in the first instance, I hope she is now convinced that I did so from an earnest desire to secure her happiness."

"Oh, of course," said Florence, carelessly. And then she went to Mary, and kissed her somewhat coldly.

"By Jove, I hope it may prove a happy match," said Sir Charles, cordially.

"I am glad to find that you entertain no objection to his becoming a family connexion. Of course his means will hardly allow of his keeping—"

The rector stopped abruptly, for at that moment the door opened, and Fenwick entered the room.

"We have just been talking about you, Mr. Towers," said Florence, when she had shaken hands with him. "Sir Charles and I are very much gratified to meet with you again," she continued, in a slightly patronising tone.

"Very much so, indeed," assented the baronet. "I don't think I have seen you since the day you brought me such good news from Devonshire."

"Allow me to take this opportunity of congratulating you upon your marriage," said Fenwick.

"From what I have just heard, I suppose we shall soon be called upon to return the compliment," said Florence, inclining her head towards him.

"I trust so," answered Fenwick, smiling. "At one time I quite despaired of being able to persuade Mr. Clare that I was worthy of being trusted with the happiness of your sister; but, thanks to a powerful argument supplied to me by the kindness of a friend, I found the task by no means very difficult."

"I think I can guess the kind of argument to which you allude," remarked Florence, dryly; "it is one which has great weight with everybody."

"It never had any weight with me," said Mary.

"Ah, but you are rather romantic upon that subject," returned Florence.

"How is your case progressing, Sir Charles?" asked Fenwick. "Do you think there is any probability of a decision being given in your favour?"

"Probability! Why, I consider it a certainty!" replied the baronet, opening his eyes in astonishment at the question.

"Let me recommend you not to be too sanguine, for I have heard that Lord Bideford is prepared to maintain that the entry which I discovered in the register at Dod-dington Church is a forgery."

"Pooh! that's impossible," said Sir Charles.

"Well, I am unable to be more explicit at present; but you will find that I have not been misinformed."

"Although I have no misgiving as to the result, I think, Charles, you should see your solicitors, and consult with them on the subject," said Mr. Clare.

"We had better go to them at once," suggested Florence, as she rose from her chair.

TABLE TALK.

THE RETIREMENT of Mr. Charles Dickens as a public "Reader" of his own works has directed attention to the long period during which he has entertained audiences on both sides of the Atlantic, and has thereby brought the creator of so many household-world characters face to face with his public. When Mr. Dickens, early in April last year, read for the last time at the Birmingham Town Hall, it was then stated,

in the various advertisements, that it was at Birmingham "where he first read in public." This, however, was a mistake. Mr. Dickens was persuaded to first make his public essay at Peterborough, in the year 1856, on behalf of the Mechanics' Institute. He imagined that the cathedral town would afford him an obscure retreat, where, in a semi-private way, he could try his powers. He was doomed to be deceived. The aristocracy and gentry of the neighbourhood flocked to hear him; the prices of the seats were raised; the hall was crowded; hundreds were turned from the doors for lack of room; and, at the conclusion of the reading—it was the evergreen "Christmas Carol"—a vote of thanks to Mr. Dickens was moved by the (late) Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord-Lieutenant of the county, and was seconded by the (late) Marquis of Huntly, Premier Marquis of Scotland. I was afterwards present at the first provincial reading given by Mr. Dickens, at the close of his first successful season in London. It was on August 15, 1858, at the Corn Exchange, Wolverhampton. The reader had only got through the first few sentences descriptive of Mr. Scrooge, and had mentioned the clerk's "dismal little cell, a sort of tank," when an irrepressible shout of laughter burst from someone in the back seats—a clerk, probably, who daily lived in a similar tank—and at once electrified and thawed the stiffness of the audience, who from that moment testified their delight in the most demonstrative manner. At the close of the entertainment, Mr. Dickens told me that the audience of that evening was the "quickest" and most appreciative before which he had read, up to that date. As Mrs. Siddons wisely said, the applause of an audience not only gives confidence and encouragement to the performer—"it does more—it gives us breath."

THE newspapers have been telling us that the famous "convent case" of "Saurin v. Starr and Kennedy" is now understood to be finally settled, on the following terms:—The £300 dowry is to be returned—which is tantamount to a verdict for the defendants—each side to pay their own costs; the suit in Chancery to be set aside, each party also paying their own costs; all papers which have passed in the suit to be returned to the respective parties; and all imputations on both sides to be withdrawn. And so ends

this celebrated *cause célèbre*, the costs in which amounted to about £8,000. Before it is dismissed to the limbo of oblivion, let us recall one of its salient features:—

YE PENITENTIAL DUSTER.

(Ye tune yt goeth to S. Betsye Bakere.)

Miss Saurin, in that "convent case"
(Unless she told a "buster"),
Was forced upon her head to wear
A penitential duster.

If brooms and brushes all went wrong,
And put her in a fluster,
For her untidiness she wore
The penitential duster.

When Starrs shot madly from their spheres,
And made Superior bluster,
That poor Nun had to veil her head
With penitential duster.

With nasty, mean, and spiteful ways,
They strove hard to disgust her;
She meekly bore them all, and wore
Her penitential duster.

In cell or school, with priest or book,
In all they did mistrust her;
They took her ring, and made her wear
A penitential duster.

They kept her in the bath-room cold,
And in a garret thrust her;
She'd mutton scraps and mouldy bread,
And penitential duster.

And, when the Reverend Mother then
With tit-bits did entrust her,
She help'd herself, and had to wear
The penitential duster.

For little peccadilloes that
With earth's stains did encrust her,
She had to pace the convent in
A penitential duster.

Though, on conventual rule, this case
Most truly shed no lustre,
A hint we all may take from that
Same penitential duster.

Suppose, that in this outer world,
Our faults we had to muster,
How many Externs then would wear
The penitential duster!

For, if those fashions were to spread
That round the cloister cluster,
How few of us would be without
Our penitential duster!

But while some, in that Convent case,
Maintain that nought was juster
Than that, for faults, the nuns should wear
A penitential duster—

I, for my part, must frankly own
I like a faith robustier!
I'd scorn to make such dust about
A penitential duster!

IN CONNECTION WITH a note that appeared in "Table Talk" recently (No. 114), concerning centenarians, and the disbelief of the late Sir George C. Lewis therein, a correspondent in Staffordshire—upon the accuracy of whose information we can depend—tells us that there is now living, in the district in which he resides, an old lady who will, should she live, attain her 101st year in August of the present year. "She is," says our informant, "very healthy, and able to walk well, and perform household duties. She can also read ordinary print without spectacles. In the words of our clergyman, who visits her, she looks 'very, very old;' but her activity is wonderful, considering her great age. To give some idea of her age," says our correspondent, "it is only necessary to recollect that she was forty-six years old when the battle of Waterloo was fought; and very few of the veterans are now left." And in the *Times* of March 19th the following paragraph about a centenarian appeared:—"At Hogg Hall, near Ampleforth station, on the Thirsk and Malton Railway, there died on Wednesday last, a Yorkshire farmer, aged 100 years. The deceased, Mr. Henry Coverley, entered his 101st year on the 20th ult., and up to that time was hearty and well. For ninety-six years deceased has lived on lands of the Archbishops of York, and last year the venerable old man attended in his capacity of school trustee of Kirby Moorside. He remembered first writing his name in a copybook in 1777." Well-authenticated instances of remarkable longevity, such as the one given above, are worth recording, as many persons, whose opinions are entitled to respect doubt the possibility of man's life being prolonged to a hundred years. Rare as such instances are, our own belief is they not very unfrequently occur under favourable conditions. Nobody doubts that a man may attain the age of ninety. Why, then, should we doubt that some exceptionally strong constitutions should retain, not only life, but some measure of vigour, at a hundred?

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No. 119.

April 9, 1870.

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THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES ;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY.

BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

CHAPTER I.



BENBOW family were settled close to Dipchester, and, as it were, kept that antique little town sweet. When their great coach trundled in state through the long street which was the spine of the place, or their quiet brougham,

which had all the significant dignity of a true nobleman in plain black evening dress, the general pulse was stirred—it was like a king, or, rather, grand duke, visiting his subjects. Yet they were only a private family—not very rich—but there was an idea of great influence, through intricate connections, which branched out like veins in the human body, the blood for which all flowed from the great centre Benbow heart. Dukes, marquises, prime ministers, were supposed to consider any wish or any request of the head of the Benbow family with respect and acquiescence. There were lords—old, as well as some newly run from the heraldic mould

—planted about ; some more, wealthy even ; but they were felt not to have *power*. Dipchester did not abase itself before them.

The town itself, to the antiquary, was charming and inviting : to the bagman, or to the soldier mind, only a poor sort of a place : geographically, very many miles behind the agreeable districts of Godspeed. There was no railway, no amusement to speak of, and but little business : all these flourished at Godspeed, the greater manufacturing town, some eight or ten miles away. Its one street wound, like a snake, in pleasant bends, lined with low houses, some of them overhanging the path, and of the genuine old framed pattern. The old Queen Anne's brick—close, smooth, firm, and bright—asserted itself everywhere with a bold independence, and flourished in an honest-glowing health, like the cheeks of a fresh country girl, and seemed to betoken a fresh stirring circulation inside.

The old Town Hall, with a stone-wigged Royal George in front, its pediment beams of a dark-varnished oak, mixed with the cheerful red ground, seemed as gay and as well burnished as a Dutch house. The old inn, "The Swan," was of the snug roadside pattern, with its wooden banner hung outside ; its parlour, with sloped sides, like a ship's cabin ; its snug bar, low rooms, and alarmingly funereal beds, which nodded and trembled as the guest clambered in, and made him think uncomfortably he was under a catafalque, and laid out for the night.

But, in its own estimation, Dipchester was raised to the dignity of a perfect metropolis by one feature ; though in other points, the inhabitants were accustomed to think and speak poorly of themselves, with a sort of sad depreciation, owning their unhappy geographical position, "at the back of Godspeed," with a Heep-like humility. This was the little theatre—or rather, the Theatre Royal, Dipchester

—which in such a place, acrimonious in its religion and so contracted in size, was a phenomenon. It, indeed, owed its existence to an accident: some hilarious and enthusiastic subscriptions by the gentlemen, in fact, years ago, who wished to “play” themselves, and who had run up the little temple. It was quaint enough in its way, standing in a little bye-quarter, looking into a patch of green common, and having “Theatre” more legibly written on its face, by its style and bearing, than it is on such places now. For it had a sort of jocund, irregular look about it, with a wooden-covered roof, while up to each of its three doors arose a small ship-cabin staircase, with a little shed or porch over all three, which went up and down with the steps. There were strange smells haunting the place, defying control, and most insubordinate on the grand nights—or one grand night—of the year. This dreadful enemy would rise slowly from the pit about the middle of the performance; but, with a gallant self-respect which deserved all praise, was privately endured with a smiling consciousness, and wholly ignored by the boxes. What kept it up was the tradition that Mr. Kemble had performed there one night. He was passing by on his way to “a gentleman’s seat”—so Mr. Haggerston, the lessee, would tell the story—and was waylaid by an old comedian and friend—then manager—Gubbins; and in a noble and gracious way consented to give “The Stranger.”

“Talk of generosity, charity, and the handsome thing,” said Mr. Haggerston, relating the incident in his box-office as a sort of bonus to the ticket-taker, “where will you find ’em, except in the profession? A man like that—that had kings and hemperors at his feet—that had but to say, ‘Give me a hundred,’ ‘two hundred,’ aye, ‘five hundred pounds, and I’ll play for you, but not till then’—to think of his coming in, like you or I, in a simple, unostentatious way, with no more pride in him than the commonest supernumerary. He stood, sir, where you are standing at this very moment, and held a conversation with Dumbleton, the previous box book-keeper!”

Pretty walks lead into Dipchester; and of a fine morning, whether going or coming, we meet along the high road the great waggon and its four horses, the cheerful tramps, and, most frequently, the travelling

artists, who carry portions of a divided show, the husband half, the wife the rest—artists without a theatre, and thrown more upon their own resources than any other members of the profession.

Not very far away from the little town we arrive at the gate of Benbow House—the temple in which the great Boss of the district is enthroned, and where he enjoys his worship. Pelham Benbow, Esq., M.P., was great among the little squirelings of the place, and very kind and gracious to them; but the feeling was of his strange, untitled influence among the mysterious dukes and marquises—of this simple commoner, who seemed to be as great as they, and even more remarkable for his want of title; as the black coat of Castlereagh made him more *distingué* among the blaze of decorations about him. What a wonderful match that was which he contrived for his eldest daughter, nothing less than the Marquis of Kinsbury’s eldest son! For his second, he found Lord Robert Purfleet; and for his own eldest son, Charles Benbow, it was known he was planning, building, digging, burrowing, and lying awake hundreds of nights, to construct an alliance of the most splendid sort, to which end he had selected a political Duke’s daughter—Lady Rosa Fulke, one of three—and which alliance would be the crowning of the edifice. For this end, also, would Benbow House, at fitful intervals, change from a dignified and morose bearing—a kind of grand, Manfred-like solitariness—into a gay and splendid activity, glittering and sparkling with lights, and teeming with life.

This almost pantomimic change would take place in a night; and it would be found that the great mansion was full of noble company—seen dimly and afar off by the common herd—sometimes a duke, sometimes a political chief, a great general, but always persons in whom power as well as rank were joined. A smooth, reverend man would be seen in the garden, in black felt wideawake, gaily chatting with Miss Lydia Benbow—that was his Grace of Canterbury, come for change of air for a few weeks. A jovial, burly gentleman would turn into the avenue on one of Mr. Benbow’s horses—that was the Right Hon. James Hoxter, Secretary for some “Affairs” or other, now exactly like a plain country squire, which he was. Haughty and in-

spid dames, beautiful girls, gallant youths, all seemed to come and pass through Benbow House, as if it were a *douane*, or customs, where all were to contribute dues to the glory and advancement of Pelham Benbow, Esq., M.P.

At this time, when the present little melodrama begins, Benbow House, like its servants, was in a blaze of gala livery, and, full of company, seemed to glitter in its windows and gardens like a piece of silver cloth. The Duke and his desired daughter, Lady Rosa, were there, with many celestial political magnates, all chosen with the greatest nicety, the most delicate anticipated care, the most tender laying of trains—the length of each fusee being calculated with a mathematical exactness, so that the motives and baits should be touched at the precise moment, and all should “go off” together.

For these gatherings took a week of painful gestation, and, though they cost vast sums, had each some aim or end intended, which more than repaid. If there was expense, there was calculation and certainty of return for that expense. The man’s—or gentleman’s—whole life had been a series of such measured calculations. So had he begun as the younger son of a good family; so had he planned his own rise, his own marriage with Lady Mary (she had been Lady Mary Tulke); so had he got into Parliament; so had he laboriously effected those joinings or friendship with the great, which he made as fast and firm, as if diamond cement had been used; so had he obtained Benbow House; so had he “got on” his two brothers, not from any affection, but from finding in them qualities which were useful to him; so had he married his two daughters; and so was he now planning his last grand scheme, the marriage of his son Charles with the political duke’s daughter.

The present house-filling was, as it were, the loading of a piece of artillery, which, at the proper time, was to be laid and discharged, with a certainty of hitting what it was aimed at. There was he now, sitting in his study, a general in a campaign at head-quarters, or a Von Moltke in a cabinet, laying out on paper all the operations. The rest of the family were carrying out these plans, unconsciously, and the pleasant entertainments of a country house were going forward—most of them

there thinking they were asked but for their own merits, and to enjoy themselves.

This was his portrait—at least, what could be seen of him, from his desk upwards, where he was swimming, as it were, on a surface of paper billows, and waves of pamphlets. A long, flat face, white and hard, which mental exercise had dried up and “taken down,” much as training affects the body. His eyes were faint and washy, instead of bold, bright, glistening orbits; his hair was a sort of spare yellow covering. He was thin and wiry, always exquisitely clean as to shaving, and which seemed done by machinery; and as smooth and level in all his surfaces and edges as though he had been neatly cast in a mould. He spoke with a quiet precision in his voice, but quite distinct, though a little husky. A microscope could not detect a speck on his clothes—his rather spare frock coat and light grey trousers—which always seemed of the same age, and, as his valet found, never could be got to grow old.

Such was the Machiavel of Benbow, as seen planning his great cast for the duke’s daughter. Seat in the House for himself, the Duke’s daughter for his son!—these were the levers with which he would prize open a peerage for himself, another seat for his son, then a fresh step up the baronial ladder. In short, the perspective of advancement he looked down was endless.

There was time before him. He was not yet forty-five. He all but doubled his life by rising at six, and going to bed at twelve or one; thus having eighteen or nineteen hours in his day, where most other men had but twelve or fourteen. He had indomitable energy, tact, and a quiet but irresistible force in all his actions.

He has just got away from the great Duke for a short time—that magnate having despatches to write—when a knock is heard at the door, and a fair, tall, open-looking youth of eighteen stands in the door. There is a girlish look about him, from the pink and delicate colour of his skin; and there is a faint straw-coloured moustache, like a bit of floss silk.

“I cannot speak to you now, Charles,” said the father in his low, measured tones—it was as if he were reading from a book. “Why are you not with Lady Rosa?”

“We are going out to ride in a moment; but I came to tell you, father, that Hag-

gerston has come up about his 'bespeak,' as he calls it. He says he has a wonderful actress—"

"Pray, don't detain me with these childish things. Is your mind ever going to rise to the serious business of life? I cannot see the man; give him a subscription."

"But Lady Rosa is quite eager about it, and Mr. Hoxter is talking to him now about it."

Mr. Benbow laid down his pen.

"Send Haggerston to me in a quarter of an hour. I shall speak to the Duke."

CHAPTER II.

MR. HAGGERSTON, manager of the Theatre Royal, was a burly man, in a tail-coat, which, with his stoutness, gave him the look, as one of the gentlemen said, of a river buoy. His cheeks were flushed, and he had a cool, blunt, and familiar manner, that no doubt came from frequently addressing audiences. He was now in the library, with a party of gentlemen sitting round, and who were glad of something to amuse them; for it had been snowing hard all the morning, and there could be no hunting. There was the Right Hon. Mr. Hoxter, chairman of the committee, as it were—an impression to which the solemn oak, and the almost parliamentary furniture of the room contributed. Other members of the committee present: Mr. Joseph Benbow, the host's brother; Colonel Hanley, "scion of a noble house;" a young and clever barrister, who wrote those smart and interesting letters in the *Times* on clergy matters, signed "Loaves and Fishes," but whose real name was Addison: and others.

"You have quite roused our curiosity, Mr. Haggerston," exclaimed the chairman. "Tell us some more about this wonderful paragon."

"Mark my words, sir, when she gets to London, she'll draw the whole town. Before long, I know, we'll have the agents down here, trying her with ten and fifteen pound a week. I know that sort of game pretty well by this time. I saw her at a little twopenny-halfpenny theatre on the circuit, and snapped her up at once."

"Who is she, do you know?" asked Colonel Hanley.

"I take her to be," said Mr. Haggerston, speaking in a low, mysterious voice, "some-

thing tip-top, as has slipped away from a noble family of the 'ristocracy, sir. She has an air—a presence—worth at the least five guineas a week."

"And what piece have you chosen for us, Mr. Haggerston?"

"An evergreen!—a piece, sir, that will keep the boards as long as there's a British pit to pay their money at the pigeon-holes. I allude to the 'Lady'—the 'Lady,' sir, of the immortal Lytton Bulwer."

"Ah, 'The Lady of Lyons,'" said Mr. Benbow, the lawyer. "Dear, sweet Pauline—what a loveable creature—so womanly. She was thrown away upon Claude, quite."

"A noble play, sir. Never knew it not to draw money."

Here entered Charles. "My father wishes to see Mr. Haggerston in his study;" and the manager hurried out.

He could not be free or familiar in that cold presence, but remained awkward and silent before that dry, cold potentate.

"I have spoken with his Grace, and the other gentlemen and ladies who are stopping here, and it seems they all desire to see whatever entertainment this is you have to offer. I must ask you to do the thing as handsomely as it can be done with your resources. Reserve a number of the very best places."

"I understand perfectly, Mr. Benbow, sir. Leave it all to me. I'll make it a kind of state visit—take down partitions between the boxes."

"I beg—I beg," said his ruler, austere, "there will be nothing exaggerated or ridiculous. Everything proper, but nothing beyond. No—er—gilt chairs, or anything of that kind. Now, understand me: or someone shall go down and see that these instructions are carried out."

"Depend on me, Mr. Benbow. Everything shall be in the nicest taste—and my eternal gratitude, sir—"

"Thank you. There, that will do, Mr. Haggerston."

At the dinner that day it was a sight to see the grand procession moving down—all the guests having more or less of *noble blood* in their veins. Mr. Benbow tenderly and reverentially leading down the Lady Rosa Fulke—the stakes for which he was now throwing: a pale and plain lady—not too young—and full of a sort of mental biliousness, which was her only substitute for beauty, and to the crowd seemed a sort of

plated refinement. They swept down. The menials stood to arms as the procession entered the soft realms of delight—all gleaming with gold and silver, and soft light, and flowers. A handsome dinner, laid out under the best conditions in some noble mansion; the table lined with beauty, rank, and wit; the table itself supporting all that is choice in food and drink; even in its wines stretching far back to some remote "laying down," and thus keeping up the associations of ancestry: all this combines to make an *ensemble* that, like the opera, becomes one of the genuine *shows* of this earth. Last came down his Grace with the lady of the house—a stately man—surprisingly young, and who, by extravagant pains and diligence, kept himself young, where another would have looked aged and dilapidated. His hair was full, brown and curly, his cheeks covered with a delicate bloom, and he had a haughty and kingly walk.

Now they are all at the work before them—Mr. Benbow in the centre of the table, so cleanly cast and impassive as to seem above the necessity of eating, and beyond the infirmity of getting flushed or talkative. There is a clatter of gay tongues, and everyone is talking of the pleasant party to the theatre to-morrow night. It was pronounced a delightful opportunity, as it was seldom now that one could see a play murdered in the raw, old-fashioned way. Acting was now levelled up into a sort of stupid, unentertaining mediocrity. The worst actor could now contrive, by imitation, a tame, insipid performance, which would neither shock nor please. There was an honest energy in the old, ill-regulated efforts. Claude, however, it was agreed, "promised sport," he being played by Mr. Hulkes—the name being "a guarantee."

"Yes," said Mr. Hoxter, "Hulkes will mouth and rave terribly. I shall certainly wait to see Hulkes in 'the immortal Bulwer Lytton's' play. That manager was very droll; I think he fancied there was a row of footlights between him and us."

"You won't laugh at the Lady of Lyons," said Colonel Hanley, "if she can act as well as she looks."

"O, you saw her, then. For shame, Hanley!"

"I was buying a pair of gloves in a shop when she came in with her maid. I know the theatrical seal and mark, stamped on

them as sheep are stamped. 'You are the Prima Donna,' I said."

"Come, that was free and easy!"

"Not to her, of course. Charming, as an off-the-stage face—a calm, innocent, round face, with an extraordinary fascination. I should have no objection to play Claude, instead of the ranting, roaring Hulkes."

Young Charley Benbow, heir and hope of the house, had been placed close to the Lady Rosa Fulke. It was as though his father had marked out the path to the possession of that lady by stages—so many to be cleared over each day. That very dinner was an opportunity, and so much amount of work was to be covered. To say the truth, the lady herself seemed conscious of these elaborate opportunities, and welcomed them with a calm tolerance—a *che sard sard* air—as though submitting to the decrees of fate and of the noble father. Her admirer, however, caught this description of the charming Lady of Lyons, and he looked over to hear more. His curiosity was stimulated.

"I heard her speak, too—a beautiful clear voice—and she had all the shopmen at her feet. I heard her name—'Miss Lydia Effingham'—of course a sham one."

"Very likely a runaway clergyman's daughter," said Mr. Hoxter. "They make up a sort of peculiar class. Whenever you hear anything adventurous, a clergyman's daughter is there. Novelists, actresses, and governesses, are generally clergymen's daughters."

In short, this subject was pleasantly debated and speculated over during that night. Anything to look forward to in a country house is always welcome, and this going in state to the little theatre was already counted on as something very piquant.

The young man, who had not as yet gone to the university, and might, as one of his friends said, have passed for a young girl if dressed up in woman's clothes, was still eager and interested in this theatrical programme. Through his father's desire that he should learn the world rather than books, he had been brought up chiefly at home, with governesses first, then tutors, and finally the discipline of a public school. From his infancy almost he had been perpetually brought down when the great magnates were in the house, so that he should grow familiar with them. In this schooling

he had seen little of the world after all ; for his father considered that theatres and shows of that sort were so many hindrances to getting on. But still the youth, Charles Pelham Benbow, was unsophisticated, rather shy, and timid, and had not even learned the A B C of the world's scholar—namely, not to blush.

The cold lady he was destined for was quite indifferent as to his partiality or attentions. Her noble father, who had so often dealt with his tenants as chattels about election time, was now about to follow the same course with her. That was all. She had gone through her *curriculum*, which had been a failure. Her glass told her she could not afford to waste time in beginning again, and she wisely preferred to retire with dignity.

After dinner came one of the state evenings at Benbow House. Spacious rooms, opening into each other ; abundant, profuse wax lights ; company sitting, standing, scattered ; loud and boisterous talk from a group on the rug ; his Grace sitting as on a throne, one leg out, the other under his chair, his Garter across his chest, while two ladies sat one on each side. He was the wonder of everyone : his florid Rubens-like face and beard, his "young man's" head of hair, divided in the middle, his good eyes, erect carriage. Yet he had grown-up sons and daughters, and was a grandfather many times over. Presently, he rose and went over to join his starched and bleached host, who still looked, and always would look, as if cast in snowy *papier mâché*, so clean and sharp were his lines ; and far off, in the small card-room, there was presently seen a trio—the Duke, the father, and the son, talking ; the latter modestly looking down, while the two fathers spoke as if to encourage him.

"Charles has promised to come back with us," said the Duke, "and must stay six weeks or two months. I mean you must first fix your head-quarters with us, and come and go as you like. I shall come and go myself *sans cérémonie* ; but her Grace and Rosa will always be there."

Had Mr. Benbow's soul been cased in any other material but *papier mâché*, a flush of pleasure and delight would have found its way to his face ; for this was one of the little explosions for which his elaborate mine was laid. The invitation was accepted joyfully.

"We shall make a political man of him," went on the Duke ; "I shall do a little of his training myself. The Duchess and Rosa are both politicians *couragées*. Nothing like being a thorough party man, even when you are *not* a man."

"Lady Rosa is looking for her fan, Charles," said his father. "See there ! go and ask her."

"I like your son," said the Duke, "and shall like him much more. I don't ask you myself to Banff Castle this time, you will come later, of course—at your own convenience. As I told Charles, I shall not be there ; but young men do not care if there is only a lady to do the honours. Rosa and he get on very well."

"No one admires Lady Rosa Fulke and her accomplishments more," said Mr. Benbow, as if he were making a legal statement.

"Yes, I hope they will get on well together."

Precious words these for Mr. Benbow—to be eaten, drunk of, dreamed of—words long looked for, thirsted for, and, to him, more than equivalent to—"I have thought it well over, and have decided to accept Charles as my son-in-law."

That night there was the usual ballad song—the pianoforte piece from the clergyman's daughter. The Lady Rosa Fulke went to "the instrument" also—"Why 'the instrument,'" said Mr. Benbow's brother, "any more than the poker or tongs, or the pier table?"—and literally ambled, in a very humble way, over the keys, some little thing which she had been taught by Pesca, the nobility's own pianist, and who was instructing the royal children. Then Mr. Charles, the candidate, stood by her side, as an escort. It was a very indifferent performance, but redeemed by the calm, aristocratic repose of the player, who made even her wrong notes with an air of self-possession.

Then the party began to break up—powdered heads flitting about ; while a general uprising set in as the potentate left the room, attended devotedly by the master of the house.

In the Duke's august chamber they had some political talk about "the party ;" and then, wishing "good night," his Grace said, "We must make a good party man of your son Charles. I know we shall all like him at Banff."

CAUGHT BY A THREAD.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SIR Charles Pennington's interview with his solicitors resulted in his receiving a renewed assurance that his claim to the earldom was incontrovertible. Mr. Blade exhibited but little surprise when he was informed by his client that it was the intention of Lord Bideford's counsel to dispute the genuineness of the entry found in the register at Doddington Church.

"It is the only chance they have," said the attorney; "but I have no doubt they know that it is far too slight to give them any reason for anticipating a decision in their favour. However, as the case will come before the committee on Monday, we shall soon know whether they intend to take that course. Meantime, though experience has taught me to have very little faith in evidence of that kind, I shall send down an expert in handwriting to Devonshire."

Sir Charles took his leave and returned to Florence, whom he had left in the brougham at the door.

"Well, what do they say about the matter?" asked Lady Pennington, looking somewhat anxiously at her husband.

"Oh, it's all right. Blade and his partners don't attach any importance to what Fenwick Towers told me, though they will prepare to meet the objection in case it should be urged."

"I wish it were all finally settled," she remarked, with a little sigh.

"As I am in the city, I had better take the opportunity of calling upon Wyvern."

"If you see him, don't forget to mention what papa said about those shares which he bought."

"Really, I don't exactly remember what he *did* say."

"How very stupid you are, Charles! Papa told you that he had written to Mr. Wyvern upon the subject, but had received no reply."

Sir Charles requested the coachman to drive to Lombard-street; and, on arriving at the office of the Leviathan Assurance Company, was ushered into Mr. Bentley Wyvern's room, where he found the manager engaged in placing his signature to a number of policies of insurance.

"How is it you haven't called to see us?" inquired Sir Charles, taking the cold yet moist hand which Bentley Wyvern held out to him.

"I have been unusually busy since your return to town."

"Then I suppose that's the reason you have not paid a visit to the rectory lately."

"One of them—the other you can have very little difficulty in guessing."

"Ah, yes—you allude to the disappointment you have experienced. Well, I always thought she was too much attached to Towers to entertain the idea of marrying you."

"I am not very likely to break my heart about the matter," said Bentley Wyvern, with a forced laugh.

"Well, I don't imagine that you are; still it must be deucedly unpleasant to be refused when one makes an offer of that kind."

"I never made her any offer. With so little encouragement, I should have been a fool to have done so," observed Bentley Wyvern rather bitterly, as he took up a sheet of paper, crushed it in his hand, and threw it into the fire.

"By the bye, Wyvern," said Sir Charles, after a pause, "I have a message to deliver to you from Mr. Clare. He wishes to know why you have not answered a letter which he sent to you relative to some shares which he is very anxious about."

"Anxious, is he? Well, you may tell him that I waited till I had consulted with Mr. Winnow before replying. I have just posted a letter to the rectory."

"Are the shares going down in the market?"

"Going down! My dear Pennington, they *have* gone down."

"Not much, I hope."

"Great Puddlingdons were offered at sixpence a share this morning, and even at that price there were very few buyers, as a 'call' will very probably be made in a few months' time."

"By Jove! And how much money has Clare invested in them?"

"About five thousand pounds," answered Bentley Wyvern, carelessly. "I had great difficulty in selling my own shares for half the price that I gave for them. If I had kept them for a few days longer, my loss would have been still more severe."

"I understand that Mrs. Graves-Parr,

too, bought some of these mining shares by your advice."

"Yes, but only a few. It was not, however, by *my* advice, but rather owing to the representations of Mr. Clare, that she purchased them. Of course, when she appealed to me, I told her that they were each day getting more valuable—and that was undoubtedly the case a short time ago. I have now reason to believe that the rapid increase in price was the result of a conspiracy, in which the directors took part."

"I am afraid Clare will never forgive you for being the cause, however indirectly, of his losing so much money."

"He is too good a Christian to let so uncharitable a feeling take possession of him," said Bentley Wyvern, with an ill-disguised sneer. "When a man is eager to increase his riches rapidly, he must be prepared to take the risks which always attend his entering into speculations of these kinds. Did Mr. Clare ask you to come specially to the city in order to see me on this subject?"

"Oh, no. The fact is, I have just called upon Hickory, Hickory, and Blade."

"I saw Blade yesterday, and from all he tells me, I am quite sure that you will soon be called upon to discharge the very pleasant duty of paying the sixty thousand pounds' worth of acceptances which you gave me."

"Some of your speculations, at any rate, turn out very profitably," said Sir Charles, without exhibiting any delight at the prospect of having to pay so large a sum.

"I am afraid, Pennington, that in your case, as in many others, gratitude only means a lively sense of favours yet to come. You will shortly be indebted to my exertions and outlay for a peerage, besides an immense fortune; yet, from your remark, I can see that you grudge me this comparatively small sum."

"Not at all, I assure you, Wyvern; but I fear that with your claim, and the very large amount I have agreed to pay that obliging wine merchant who guaranteed the attorneys' costs, added to my previous debts, I shall have to mortgage part of my estates to clear myself of liability."

"You may consider yourself very fortunate that you are likely to have any estates to mortgage," rejoined Bentley Wyvern, in so meaning a tone that the baronet looked at him in surprise, and remained silent for a minute.

"I suppose you will go to Westminster on Monday to hear how the case goes on?"

"Oh, certainly," replied Bentley Wyvern, with emphasis.

"Towers, whom I saw at the rectory this morning, told me that Sir William Thorpe's counsel intend to maintain that the entry in the register at Doddington is a forgery."

"What grounds have they for making such a charge?" asked Bentley Wyvern, with sudden vehemence.

"I really don't know; but Blade is of opinion that they haven't any."

"Blade may possibly be mistaken," said Bentley Wyvern, playing nervously with his watch-chain. "I wish you could ascertain from Mr. Towers, without delay, all that he has heard upon that point."

"But I can't, for he gave me to understand that he was prohibited from affording me any further information."

"What you now say inclines me to believe," observed Bentley Wyvern, thoughtfully, "that they really think they have discovered something tending to throw suspicion on the entry of the marriage, and are trying to take you by surprise. Well," he continued, with difficulty repressing a sigh of weariness, "I don't think there is any reason for feeling uneasy as to the result."

"I want you to lend me fifty pounds," said Sir Charles, abruptly. "The fact is, that my trip to the Continent has been rather expensive, and I am quite without money."

"I will send you a cheque on Monday."

"Can't you let me have one now?"

"No; my cheque-book is at home, so you will have to wait till the day after tomorrow—unless, indeed, you choose to borrow what you require from Blade. Pardon me for saying, however, that I should have thought your marriage would have provided you with sufficient means for temporary purposes at least."

"You don't seem to understand affairs of that kind. Lady Pennington's money is settled upon herself, and I have not the slightest intention of spending a penny of it."

"A very laudable resolve, and I hope that you may always be able to adhere to it. And now you must forgive me for reminding you that I am extremely busy. Convey my kind regards to Lady Pennington, and say that, unless some—unforeseen

circumstance should prevent me, I shall call at your house on Wednesday next."

When Sir Charles had taken his leave, Bentley Wyvern, instead of continuing his labours, sat motionless, with his head leaning upon his hand, for nearly half an hour. To him the baronet's communication relative to the entry in the marriage register had a startling significance, and warned him to prepare for the possibility of an adverse decision by the Committee for Privileges. At length he rose from his chair, and went to a small private safe, whence he took a number of letters and papers, most of which he carefully burnt.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE following Tuesday evening, Mr. Clare was sitting in the drawing-room of the rectory with both his daughters, when Sir Charles Pennington, followed by Fenwick, entered.

"Well, I hope that to-day's proceedings have been as satisfactory as those of yesterday," said the rector, putting down a book that he was reading. "Why, what has happened, Charles?" he asked, with a look of alarm, as he observed the haggard appearance of his son-in-law's face.

"The decision will not be given till to-morrow," interposed Fenwick, gravely.

"But there is no doubt as to what it will be," said Sir Charles, seating himself upon a couch, and covering his face with both hands.

"Tell me what has taken place," demanded Lady Pennington, impatiently.

The baronet made no reply, and remained in the same position.

"You must prepare yourself for a great disappointment," said Fenwick. "It has been satisfactorily proved that Reginald Pennington could not have legally married Elizabeth Pontifex at the time he is alleged to have done so."

"How—how could that be proved when the entry of the marriage is strong evidence to the contrary?" inquired Mr. Clare, hurriedly.

"It has been discovered that, a fortnight before that date, he contracted a marriage with Ellen Jane Meredith in the parish church of Chuffneythorp."

"This is most extraordinary—I am quite unable to understand what you tell me," said Mr. Clare, looking with a bewildered air at Lady Pennington.

"You must surely comprehend the impossibility of a man having two wives living at the same time," remarked Fenwick.

"Oh, of course. But then the question arises as to which of these women was legally the wife of Reginald Pennington."

"I am afraid that the news we have brought has somewhat confused you," said Fenwick, unable to repress a smile, "otherwise you would at once perceive that the woman he first married is alone legally his wife."

"Yes—yes—I know that. What I meant to ask you was, which of these two entries, referring to the same person, is the most likely to be a forgery?"

"That at Doddington, for it is not entered in the diocesan registry, whereas the one at Chuffneythorp *is* entered."

"I suppose no clue has been obtained which is likely to lead to the discovery of the guilty person?" inquired Mr. Clare, in a severe tone, as he glanced towards his son-in-law.

"You had better ask Charles that question," suggested Lady Pennington. "I have no doubt he can afford you every information as to the person who committed the fraud."

"Do you dare to suspect me of being in any way implicated in it?" said Sir Charles, springing to his feet, and looking indignantly at his wife.

"I know of nobody else who had any motive for the commission of the act," she replied, boldly.

"By Jove! I can never forgive you for this cruel insult!"

"Oh, Florence! how can you make such a dreadful charge against your husband?" exclaimed Mary.

"And a perfectly groundless one, I feel convinced," said Fenwick, sternly. "Your question was put to me, Mr. Clare, but I have not yet been permitted to reply to it. Lord Bideford's attorneys brought up a witness from Devonshire named Jacob Rule, who is the clerk of Doddington Church. I spoke to the old man just before he gave his evidence, and he immediately recollected the visit which I had once paid to the church. While we were conversing, Mr. Bentley Wyvern came into the House of Lords, and, without observing either of us, took a position within a few feet of me. Rule at once recognised him, and informed me in a whisper that Mr. Wyvern was a

celebrated artist who had visited Dodding-ton a few months ago, ostensibly for the purpose of making a drawing of a monument within the church. But on that occasion your friend, Mr. Wyvern, chose to adopt the name of Paul Grantly."

"Allow me to interrupt you—Mr. Wyvern is no longer among my friends," said the rector, whose face suddenly became very red.

"Oh, indeed, I was not aware of that," remarked Fenwick, glancing at Mary. "Well, there is the strongest reason for suspecting that this man Wyvern made the entry as he was left alone in the church for some time; and the postmaster, who happened to look through the window, saw him in the vestry with a large book open before him. A telegram has been sent to the postmaster, and he will probably arrive in London tomorrow morning. But, even without his testimony, it is the decided opinion of counsel that Sir Charles Pennington has no claim to the earldom of Bideford."

"May I ask at whose instigation it is supposed that Mr. Wyvern made the entry of the marriage?" said Lady Pennington, with a short hysterical laugh.

"It was not at mine," answered the baronet, quickly.

"Taking advantage of the necessities of Sir Charles, this man, in return for small loans and a promise to assist him in discovering the evidence necessary to establish a claim to the peerage, obtained from him acceptances to the extent of sixty thousand pounds," exclaimed Fenwick. "One has no difficulty, therefore, in understanding the motive which induced Mr. Wyvern to run the risk of manufacturing evidence."

"This is a terrible disappointment," said Mr. Clare, walking to the window to hide his agitation.

"Have you no word of sympathy or kindness to bestow upon your husband?" said Mary, in a low voice, to her sister.

"I have been deceived," she replied, sobbing passionately.

"It is I who have been deceived," said Sir Charles, sternly. "I now clearly perceive that you never loved me. Our married life is not likely to be a very happy one," he added, bitterly; and then he abruptly left the room.

"Oh, Fenwick! bring him back, and endeavour to reconcile them," urged Mary, unable to restrain her tears.

"It would be useless. He will not so readily forgive the outrage to his feelings which he has experienced from your sister," whispered Fenwick, as he bent over her.

"It is strange that I should have been so completely deceived in that man Wyvern," muttered the rector, shaking his head thoughtfully. A few minutes after he retired to his study, and wrote a long letter to Dr. Craven.

CHAPTER XX.

MR. BENTLEY WYVERN rose very early the following morning, and, having made a somewhat hurried breakfast, rang the bell.

"Have you sent on my luggage to the station?" he inquired, when George appeared.

"Nearly half an hour ago, sir."

"Very well. If any inquiries are made during my absence, say that I am in Edinburgh, and that I shall return in the course of next week."

"Shall I forward your letters to the usual address there?"

"Well, no. I am uncertain as to which hotel I shall stay at on this occasion, so you had better keep them till I write to you."

Taking up a travelling bag which lay upon a chair, Bentley Wyvern told his servant to put it into the brougham, which was waiting at the door. When the man had left the room, the occupier of the old hall went to the window, and contemplated the handsome grounds with a bitter smile.

"You've only ten minutes to spare if you wish to catch the next train, sir," said George, returning to the door of the room.

Bentley Wyvern walked rapidly to the brougham, entered it, and was quickly taken to the station.

The coachman looked round from his box and touched his hat when Bentley Wyvern alighted.

"I wish you a pleasant journey, sir."

"Thank you."

"The only man who says a few words of farewell," thought Bentley Wyvern, as he went into the station. Selecting an unoccupied carriage, as soon as the train started he opened the travelling bag and took out a pea jacket and rough pilot cloth trousers, in which he dressed himself. The clothes he had worn he placed in the bag, and throwing his hat through the window, put on a blue cloth cap. Arrived at the Wa-

terloo terminus, he left the bag in charge of a porter in the parcels office, and getting his luggage—which merely contained an outfit for a voyage—placed upon a cab, he got into the vehicle, and told the driver to take him to the Euston-square terminus. Having gone to a barber's shop, and carefully shaved off his moustache and whiskers, he returned to the railway station, hired another cab, and was taken to St. Katherine's Docks. Here he learnt, to his satisfaction, that *The Light Brigade*—a ship in which he had secured a passage to Canada—was in the act of being hauled out of dock into the river. In a few minutes he got on board, and shortly after the vessel dropped her anchor in the Thames. All that day he watched every boat that neared the ship, with a vague fear that it might contain a constable commissioned to arrest him. He knew that one of his frauds committed upon the assurance company would be discovered in the course of the afternoon, and dreaded the consequences.

"If Pennington's case had not broken down yesterday, I should have been able to discount one of his bills this morning," he thought, as he paced backwards and forwards on the quarter-deck that night. The next day, about noon, he was leaning over the bulwarks, listening to the welcome sounds which assured him that the sailors were weighing anchor, when a hand was laid on his shoulder.

"So you have come to this after all, Bentley," whispered a voice in his ear.

He turned his ghastly face towards the speaker, and recognised his brother.

"You'll never be able to disguise yourself from anyone that's acquainted with you," continued Porson; "I knew you in a moment by your eyes."

"Why have you come after me, Tom?" stammered Bentley Wyvern.

"I'm on the regular staff of detectives now, and frequently go on board ships just before they sail."

"Ah, well; I am glad to have an opportunity of bidding you good-bye," said Bentley Wyvern, drawing a long breath.

"You're going to Canada?"

"I am, but I don't intend to remain there."

"What have you done, Bentley, that you are leaving the country in this way? I accused you wrongful once before, and I hope I'm making a similar mistake now."

"I decline to answer any questions on that point."

"Well, as the vessel is going rapidly with the tide, I must say good-bye, Bentley. I shall look in the papers to ascertain whether *The Light Brigade* gets safe to port."

Porson grasped his brother's extended hand, and descended the ship's side into the boat that was waiting for him. But for some months afterwards he looked in vain for the announcement of the safe arrival of *The Light Brigade*. At last the news came that she was wrecked. There were only ten people saved, and Bentley Wyvern was *not* among the number. In the meantime it had been discovered that the Leviathan Assurance Company was hopelessly insolvent.

* * * * *

Three weeks after Fenwick's marriage with Mary, a letter was forwarded to his residence at Twickenham from Northumberland-street. It came from Australia, and was signed Ralph Fuller. The contents were to the effect that Susan Harding was a convicted felon, and that the writer had fully gratified his revenge by allowing her to marry Richard Towers.

Fenwick tore up the letter, and threw it into the fire.

"Is that an unpleasant communication which you have just received?" asked Mary, looking at him somewhat anxiously.

"It was intended to be so, but it has quite failed in its object. After all, the best remedy for an injury is to forget it."

And now but little more of my tale remains to be told. Lord Bideford—who considered himself indebted to Fenwick for the discovery of the fraud perpetrated by Bentley Wyvern—gave the living of Ormsgill to the Reverend Frank Towers. Of Mary and her husband, it is only necessary to say that they are happy in their mutual love, and have a bright-eyed boy, whom they have christened Ulysses. But Florence? Well, there is the vision of a woman who regularly visits Baden-Baden during the *kurzeit*, which rises before me. She is to be seen staking small sums at rouge-et-noir, and industriously pricking a card as a guide to the chances of the table. It is whispered among the English visitors that she is Lady Pennington, who separated from her husband a few years previously.

THE END.

THE MORTIMERS :

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK II.—CHAPTER VII.

RESCUED.

VERY fortunate, indeed, was it for Charles Mortimer's chance of setting his feet on dry ground again that Erle was an expert swimmer as well as an exceptionally brave and generous man.

Before plunging into the river to Mortimer's rescue, Erle had carefully noted the spot where he was struggling with the treacherous waters. Immediately under the windows of the building in which Erle's rooms were situate, the river, though narrow, was deep. It was, perhaps, not more than thirty or five and thirty yards across, from side to side, but its depth was at least ten feet. On the college side, the buildings extended for some distance along the bank, and adjoining them was a garden, having a terraced walk. On the side opposite it was equally hopeless to attempt a landing, as the bank was very high above the river, and was bricked for a long way from the place where the two men then were.

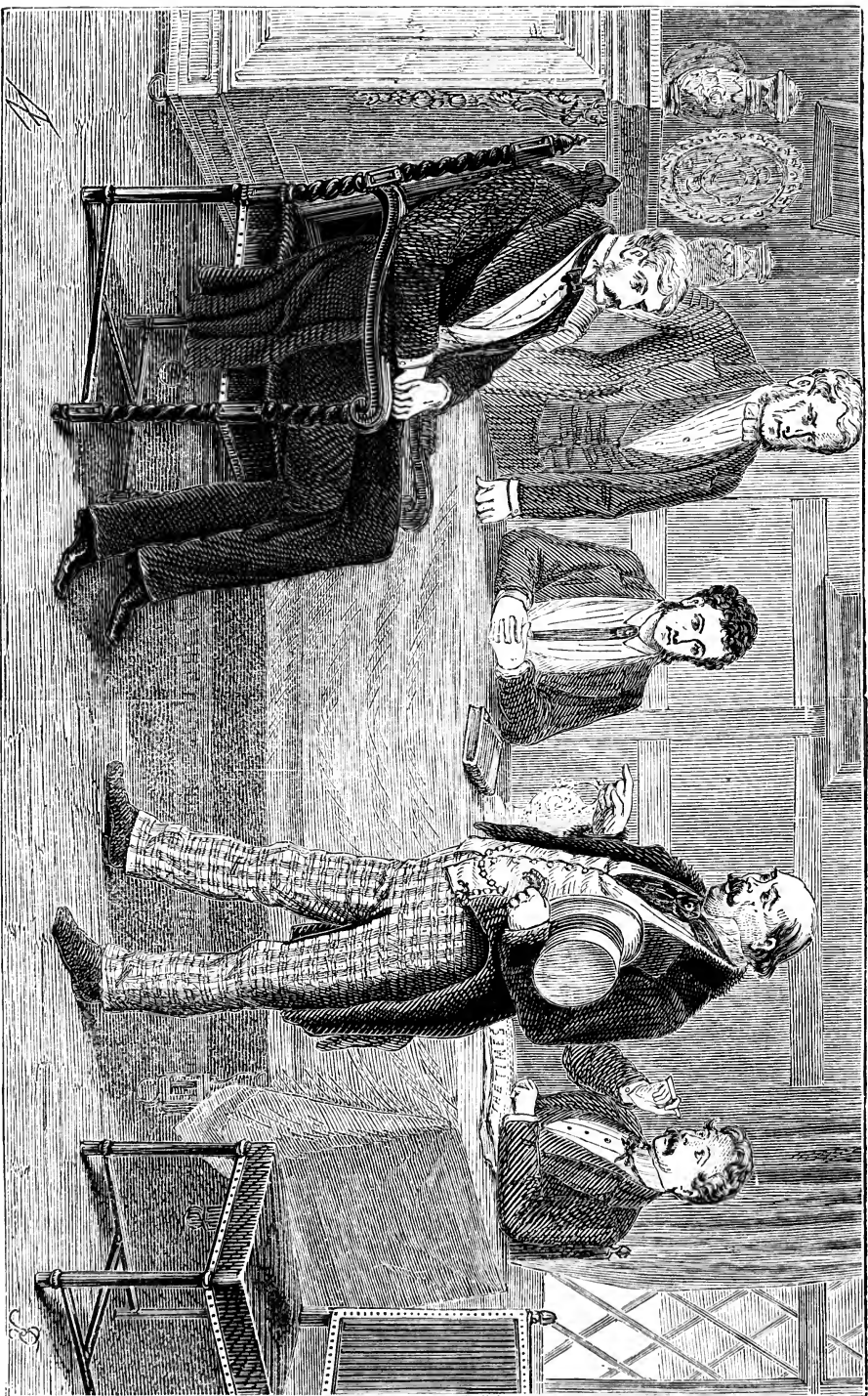
The distance they were removed from any practicable place of landing added much to the difficulty of Erle's attempt to extricate Mortimer from his perilous situation. Making a few rapid strokes when he rose to the surface after his plunge, Erle was almost instantly at the place where he had seen Mortimer ineffectually struggling and plunging in the water. Now, however, his cap only remained floating on the top of the stream at this spot. After an instant of intense anxiety for his safety, Erle perceived him rising to the surface again, a few yards nearer the bridge over which he had climbed a few minutes before. In a moment he was at his side, and was seized by Mortimer with the convulsive grasp of a drowning man. Holding him up, and keeping his head above water as well as he was able, Erle turned his course down the river, and, striking out vigorously, he soon reached the bridge. In the early summer morning, a man happened at that instant to be passing, and saw the two men in the water below him. Erle, with his burden, passed under it, and emerged on the other side. Impeded as he was by the

helpless form of Mortimer, he found it no easy matter to make headway against the stream. The distance he had still to swim was considerable. Continuing his efforts with redoubled vigour and energy, after some moments of anxious and exhausting labour, he was enabled to get into shallower water, and approach the bank at a place where it was tolerably easy to effect a landing.

The passer-by who had witnessed his struggle, without attempting to give any alarm or procure further assistance, had run round at the top of his speed to the point for which he saw Erle was making. He arrived just in time to assist in getting the two men out of the water. And his help was needed, for Erle was much spent with his exertions.

Further assistance was speedily procured, and Mortimer, helpless though not insensible, was carried into the college; and Erle, exhausted, and dripping with wet, walked in through the gate before the astonished gaze of Jenkins, the porter, without stopping to speak or explain. He walked on through the great quadrangle and down by the old cloisters—now bright in the beams of the morning sun—until he reached his own rooms. Shutting his door fast against all intruders, he quickly removed his wet clothes, and, having rubbed himself dry, was soon again in bed. Here his thoughts were occupied in reflections on all the events that had happened to him that night, until his weary eyelids at last closed in sleep. Light and restless as were his slumbers, and agitated as was his mind by the occurrences previous to his gallant rescue of his enemy from death, with that remembrance, he fell asleep with a quiet conscience—the consciousness of having performed a noble action.

There were a good many late breakfasts that morning at Tudor; for when seven o'clock came, and the bedmakers and gyps made their appearance, the news that Erle and Mortimer had only quite lately been got out of the water, struck them the very reverse of dumb with amazement. On the contrary, round about their several pumps, when fetching their masters' bath water; at the butteries and the kitchens, the exciting event was the one engrossing topic of conversation. With arms a-kimbo, and outstretched necks, these garrulous old ladies speculated on the causes and results likely



Once a Week.]

"A NOBLE PLAY, SIR. NEVER KNEW IT NOT TO DRAW MONEY."—[Page 202.]

[April 9, 1870.]

to be connected with the event, with no more wisdom than might be expected of them. Their cans stood empty around them, and the pump handle idle at their side; their threepenny loaves rolled on to the flags, and little lengths of butter were picked up off the gravel to be put back on the plates, from which—being held at an unusual angle—they had fallen almost unheeded in the general excitement. In raking the cinders out of their masters' grates, they made as much noise as possible, in the hope of waking them from their slumbers, and having the pleasure of being first to tell the news. The wildest and most alarming theories were received with the most ready credence. Suicide! "One—two—three—away," at the same moment, from two different windows, into the river, was a favourite opinion. A struggle on the bank—an attempt to push each other in, followed by the fall of both, was another popular belief. Mrs. Leech—who as Erle's own bedmaker, and therefore the most likely person to know how he would act under any given circumstances—was an object of general interest, and held quite a *levée* by the great pump in the Cloister Court. Her opinion, however, was not received with any degree of favour, as it tended to destroy the romantic mystery hanging about the affair.

"I think, you know," Mrs. Leech explained, "as Mr. Mortimer was a leanin' out and overreached hisself, and Mr. Erle went in after him."

This opinion of the worthy lady's, however, was met at once with a general murmur of incredulity. It was much too simple an explanation.

"I allus hev said," she proceeded—"and often and often to the tooter—as them abominable winders, lookin' on to that river, was dangerous for young gentlemen, and wire Was put over the one nighest the bridge—though that was because stones used to be throwed at it."

The bell for morning chapel had ceased ringing before this conference was dispersed. Mrs. Leech then proceeded in her usual composed and leisurely manner to light the fires and boil the kettles of the six gentlemen on her own staircase, over whose domestic arrangements she presided; and next thought proper to lay the cloth and put out the breakfast things on each of their tables, Erle's among the number—his room was the

last on her list; and when Mr. J. Prigg, the gyp on the letter Z staircase, entered with his cans of water, he found Mrs. Leech, with her ear close to Erle's door, in an attitude of respectful but earnest attention.

"Hello! Leech," Mr. Prigg remarked, elevating his eyebrows in an inquiring manner.

"I was a listenin' at his door, James Prigg," replied that lady.

"I see you was," said the gyp.

"I wonder if he's asleep."

"'Ear anythink movin'?"

"No," answered Mrs. Leech, after a moment's pause, "nothink. I believe he's asleep."

"Ha' past eight," said Prigg; "we ought to wake him."

"I don't know what to do," replied Mrs. Leech, in a hesitating manner.

"You give a tap at the door," said Prigg, putting down his cans of water, and advancing towards the bedmaker.

Mrs. Leech gave a tap.

Mr. James Prigg tapped.

Leech and Prigg rapped and knocked together as loud as their knuckles allowed them.

But there was no answer from within.

Exchanging apprehensive glances, they opened the door, and entered the chamber.

Reginald Erle was gone.

Mortimer, who had been taken into Marsden's rooms after his immersion, found no ill effect resulting from his very narrow escape from drowning.

His confusion was very great when he was informed to whom he was indebted for his life.

He sat up in bed, swallowing some tea and toast, and every moment expecting a visit from the tutor, to whom the events of the evening and his subsequent doings had been told.

A few of his very intimate friends were affording him what hope they could, from Erle's generosity, and the tutor's clemency towards offenders.

Commissioned to see Reginald and sound him on the subject, two of these gentlemen paid a visit to his rooms, only to find that at noon he had not returned. Then the truth flashed upon their minds—Erle would not come back.

Over the grey stone bridge, down the avenue of tall limes, through the iron gates,

as the deep-toned bell in the turret sounded the hour of seven, a young man walked with rapid strides.

Out into the road at the Backs, under the high elms, through the fields, he strode. On past the old water-mill at Grantchester, into the high road, with quick, impulsive steps he walked towards London—anywhere, away from Cambridge.

For miles, at the commencement of his journey, his way lay through a flat and dull country, presenting scarcely an object of interest by the way. But he thought little of the landscape spread out before him; its beauties or defects were passed unnoticed. The road he took was not unfamiliar to him. Several times before he had walked from Cambridge to London. Once he had performed the journey in a day. This was his intention now. So he pushed along apace on the dusty turnpike roads, and through straggling villages, with their yellow-washed thatched cottages; and the people stared at him as he passed by heedless of their notice.

After walking for some two or three hours he entered a small town. It was market day, and the streets were full of busy country people, come thither to buy or sell. In the centre of the town was a hostelry of some size. Horses were drinking from a trough in front of the house—loungers, and some three or four currish-looking dogs, hung about the door. Feeling very thirsty—a hot and feverish thirst—he entered and called for something to refresh himself. Though he had eaten no breakfast, he felt neither hunger nor the slightest appetite for food—only the fierce thirst. The people stared, as, pushing past them, the pale, haggard traveller hurried on his way. He quickly left the little town behind him. The country now bore a more broken aspect. His path lay along a high plateau, commanding pretty views of wood and meadow, with the Hertfordshire hills looming dark in the background.

So he proceeded on his way, till about two hours after noon he entered a town of larger size than any he had yet passed. He had got over the first thirty miles of his journey. Here he determined to rest awhile; and, threading his way through the old-fashioned and irregularly built street, he came to the principal inn. The sign was the King's Arms. A high pole, with a likeness of his late Majesty King George the

Fourth, of pious memory, swinging and creaking above it, displayed this before the eyes of travellers. The gateway stood hospitably wide open. On either side the doors of the rooms opened. He entered a sitting-room, and rang the bell. A brisk waiter entered in answer to the summons, and took his order for some food and drink.

But when his dinner was placed before him he was unable to swallow more than a few mouthfuls, but he still felt a burning thirst.

When Erle—we need hardly say it was he—had finished his meal, and, as he thought, rested himself sufficiently, he rose to pursue his journey; but he found himself very stiff, and with a novel and acute pain in his joints that made further progress impossible. He was reluctantly compelled to stay—for a night at least.

In the morning a doctor was called in. It was not probable, he said, that Erle would be able to proceed on his way towards London on that day. Each of his joints had become the seat of acute pain. Sometimes shifting about from his ankles to his knees, or from his knuckles to his elbows—sometimes attacking all at one time. When the doctor saw his flushed cheeks and full bounding pulse, he easily recognized the symptoms of acute rheumatism. He heard from Erle an account of his leap into the river, which had brought on the attack, and advised him to communicate with his friends at once. This Reginald, afraid of alarming Dr. Gasc, refused to do, saying he should be better in a day or two.

Attended by the landlady of the little inn—a kind, motherly woman—and this country surgeon, he lay for a day or two, the pain and fever increasing hourly. He became so sensitive as to dread the touch of the landlady as she shook up his pillow or smoothed the bedclothes. He feared the shaking of the bed as the surgeon moved across the room. Lying in this helpless condition, two or three slow and painful days passed. Tortured with bodily anguish, and in a most unquiet frame of mind, Erle lay thus till, on the fifth day of his illness, his senses fled, and his speech was but the raving of delirium.

When his mind was restored to him, he found kind faces round his bed, friendly succour near. Madam, and Dr. Gasc, and his friend Campbell were with him. Without speaking, he placed his hands in Campbell's and the Doctor's.

SNAKE-BITES AND THEIR ANTIDOTES.—PART I.

AMONG the remedies applied by natives for the cure of snake-bites, I do not think there are any which demand notice. In the native pharmacopœia there is no single remedy which is at all efficacious. They incline to the use of charms and incantations, and attach only a secondary importance to medicinal treatment. If under some special treatment, accompanied by superstitious incantations, a cure were effected, a vast majority of the people would unhesitatingly attribute the result to the mystic rites, and not to the curative properties of the medicine. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that they have not attained to any excellence, especially when it is considered that even we, with our high civilization, knowledge of chemistry, and powers of analysis, are compelled to acknowledge that we are able to do but little against the irresistible virus of the cobra. Still, our remedies are unaccompanied by any hocus-pocus, and stand or fall—and are meant to stand or fall—by their intrinsic merits. Some certainly are of a “quack” description; but they are quack only in this—that the principle of their operation is unknown, and cannot therefore be established. Others are based upon fixed principles, such as stimulating and purifying the infected blood, invigorating the system, destroying the poison on the moment of entry into the veins, and such like.

Two cases of cure of alleged snake-bites, effected upon natives, have come under my personal observation, in one instance by “eau-de-luce,” brandy, and violent friction, in the other by the same means, with the exception of the eau-de-luce, which was not procurable at the moment. I have said “alleged snake-bites” advisedly, because I cannot speak with any certainty on the point, nor as to the species of the snake in each case. Marks similar to those usually inflicted by a snake were indicated by the bystanders, the symptoms were identical with those which usually accompany the operation of snake venom, and the statements of the patients on recovery were that they had been bitten by snakes. I have, therefore, every reason to believe that they were what they were assumed to be.

I have, however, no evidence of the type of snake. One patient frankly acknowledged that he had no idea what kind of snake had bitten him. He was simply aware that he had been bitten by a snake, and from that moment had been in a state of terror. The other patient indicated a kerite as the offender. I should, however, be loath to place too implicit a reliance on his statement. In the first case (said to be a case of kerite bite), when European assistance was afforded, the patient, who had apparently been bitten just above the ankle, was nearly senseless. Eau-de-luce was at once applied externally to the wound, and well rubbed in; and twenty-five drops of eau-de-luce were poured down his mouth, which was firmly clenched, and was with difficulty forced open by an iron instrument. He was then raised, his limbs well rubbed, and he was forced to walk. In five minutes another dose, diluted in water, was given. Brandy was poured down his throat at intervals, and circulation induced by vigorous friction. The sufferer gradually revived; and in the morning, twelve hours after the accident, was quite well.

In the second instance, the patient was quite sensible, but languid. He said he had been bitten at 3 p.m. It was then 8:30 p.m. He was gradually becoming more inactive, but on being roused forcibly, and plied at intervals with strong doses of brandy, he became more lively, and eventually recovered. In this instance, also, when the sufferer was at the worst, a great difficulty was experienced in opening the jaw to administer the liquor.

Among other successful cases, two have come to my knowledge which are somewhat striking. One occurred to a gentleman in the Indian Civil Service, who was bitten by a cobra on the tip of the finger. With considerable presence of mind, he took off his coat, and at once made a strict ligature on the arm, just under the shoulder, justly reflecting that the poison might have found its way past the fingers and wrist. He then made deep cross incisions on the wound, and, keeping the hand pointed downwards, expressed as much blood as possible. The poison appears to have been eradicated, for he experienced no unfavourable symptoms subsequently. It is not always that such happy results follow, even when a ligature is instantly and skilfully applied, as will be seen in a subsequent portion of this article.

Indeed, the poison is so subtle, and the difficulty of compressing the arteries sufficiently so difficult, that this antidote, which when practicable seems to be the only hopeful one, is rarely successful.

The second case was brought to public notice in a Calcutta journal by one Kader-nath Mitter. It appears that a native woman, by name Khired, was bitten by a snake, *alleged* to have been a cobra. The lady was very far gone when Mr. Mitter was called in. I do not mean to imply by the phrase "called in," that Mr. Mitter was a professional gentleman—the phrase is, perhaps, an inaccurate one, likely to mislead; but I think his *modus operandi* is sufficiently eccentric and unorthodox to preclude any possibility of a mistake. It may, however, be more correct to say that he appeared on the scene. He had apparently heard that a woman lay at death's door in his neighbourhood, a victim to snake poison. This philanthropic gentleman at once perceived that his services might be valuable—(philanthropy and moral philosophy are especially affected by the rising generation of Bengal, to which I imagine this amateur *Æsculapius* belonged)—he therefore felt himself bound to assist. He had heard that ammonia was sometimes used as a remedy. He had probably very little idea what ammonia was, but, like a drowning man, sooner than catch at nothing at all, he caught at the straw presented by his knowledge of the existence of ammonia, and he trusted to his own acumen to guide him in its administration. From a neighbouring chemist he at once procured two ounces of the drug, and, subsequently, six ounces more. Thus armed he proceeded to the cure, administering every five minutes drachm doses, until at last the poor woman articulated, with emotion, that she felt a burning sensation in her chest, and was "like to die" of thirst. A little cold water was allowed, and then the drachm doses were brought into full swing again, but luckily at longer intervals. Eventually a cure was effected.

This rough and ready treatment seems to have alarmed the medical profession; for within a day or two afterwards two letters appeared in the same journal, one signed by a surgeon-major, animadverting upon the extraordinary nature of the treatment, and cautioning the public against putting it into operation too readily; for, as he observed,

ammonia in such liberal doses was equally as likely to destroy an ordinary patient as any snake-bite; and he attributed the recovery in that case to the extraordinary strong constitution of the sufferer, who succeeded in struggling back into life in spite of the combined effects of the venom and its supposed antidote.

Lately, in Calcutta and its neighbourhood, a series of experiments have been attempted, by both professional and unprofessional men, with a view to testing accurately the best known remedies against the virus of snake-poison. With what result, it is proposed to show by a brief review of the experiments which have come under personal observation, or have been brought to notice through the medium of the local press. It will be as well first to enumerate the different processes which have come under trial during the course of experiment, as also such as have been suggested by amateurs whose interest has been aroused during the investigation.

1st. Both amateurs and professional men seem to have relied in a great measure on ammonia, or some preparation containing it in large proportions. This has been applied, both externally by friction on the wound, and internally by frequent doses in solution, and also by injection into a vein or artery with a hypodermic syringe. A solution of quinine, and also that known as "Condy's solution," were likewise injected in the same manner.

2nd. Carbolic acid rubbed into a fresh wound, previously scarified, both alone and aided by doses of ammonia, has received considerable support from some.

3rd. The actual cautery, generally in combination with any or all other modes of treatment.

4th. In cases where the extremities of the limb were the parts bitten, the use of a strict ligature has preceded other remedies used in conjunction with it.

6th. The following antidote also found its way into a public journal, but there is no evidence of its ever having been resorted to by any of the experimentors, nor does the communicator attempt to establish its efficacy by any mention of recorded instances of cure:—

"The remedy referred to is the juice of the cotton plant—the shrub variety—and the method of treatment as follows:—A wine-glass of the juice is to be administered

immediately, or as soon as possible after the bite. The bitten part to be excised, and some of the juice rubbed in. Injection is to be preferred. Also to be rubbed into such parts where absorption is speedily promoted. This mode of treatment to be repeated every quarter or half an hour, according to the case, and to be discontinued either after the third or fourth repetition, or some time after the patient has shown signs of amendment."

7th. Dr. Halford's (Professor of Anatomy, &c., Melbourne, Australia) system has been prominently brought before the public, and has to a certain extent been recognised and sanctioned for general adoption in the Bombay Presidency of India, by order of the Inspector-General of Hospitals (Indian Forces) of that Presidency. Briefly stated, it is the system which professes to cure by the injection of ammonia into the blood. It has been tried, with other antidotes, by Dr. Fayrer, of Calcutta, in a course of experiments, with what result will be demonstrated further on.

The following account of the successful cure, by means of ammonia and carbolic acid, of a dog bitten by a cobra, appeared in the *Englishman* of the 25th July, 1869:—"A fine fresh cobra was brought in this morning; the 'pariah'"—(the Indian term for mongrel dogs, answering pretty nearly to our "cur")—"dogs were secured, and each was bitten. One was left to its fate. The other was experimented upon by the acids. The result of each case I note underneath." Condensed, the main features of the case appear to have been as follows:—The first dog bitten was full-grown, and received two bites at 11.25 a.m. At 12 noon he lay down, breathing heavily. The torpor increased rapidly, and at 12.32—that is, in one hour and twenty-four minutes—he was dead. The second dog also was a full-grown one, and was bitten by the same snake at 12.54 p.m. Carbolic acid was applied at the excised wound three minutes afterwards. In half an hour the dog appeared lethargic. Ammonia (eau-de-luce) in solution, in a twelve-minim dose, was given internally. He rallied at once, and in the evening was none the worse. It will be noted that the dog operated upon received the *third* bite of the cobra. There is, therefore, room for presumption that the virus of the snake had been in a great measure exhausted in the two previous attacks. This view is supported

by subsequent experiments made by the same gentleman in my presence. On the 31st July we proceeded, with three other gentlemen, to the Government Saib, where a cobra was waiting for us. The snake was not full-grown, but sufficiently so to conceal the most virulent poison. On this occasion, at our suggestion, the dog upon which it was proposed to operate was bitten first—three times on the leg. Carbolic acid was applied after the lapse of three minutes to the scarified wound. In an hour and five minutes the dog lay down, breathing heavily, and rapidly became worse. Ammonia was administered on the appearance of worse symptoms, but with no favourable result. The dog died in one hour and nineteen minutes.

Within five minutes of the time the first dog was bitten, a second, a puppy, was struck twice severely on the nose by the same snake. (It must be remembered these were the fourth and fifth bites.) Blood flowed from the wounds. He was then carefully watched. No ill effects followed. A third dog, also a puppy, was bitten by a cobra fourteen inches long, with a view to ascertaining whether any virus could be concealed by so young a specimen. No remedies were applied, and the dog was none the worse. The youngster bit most viciously, and evidently had the will to injure; but it is apparent that in their earliest days no poisonous secretion is deposited in the fang—perhaps the fang itself is of later growth. The same dog was now applied to the larger cobra; but without ill effects.

On the 3rd of August, at the same place, the same cobra, which had been in confinement some time, was forced to bite a full-grown pariah. Carbolic acid was applied as usual. No symptoms of suffering were observed. Eau-de-luce in solution was administered as a precautionary measure half an hour after the bite. A second dog was also bitten repeatedly by the same cobra, but he also was none the worse. The just conclusion to which this series of experiments leads us, is that, in the first place, bites subsequent to the first and second are less fatal as they are repeated; and, secondly, that confinement tends to prohibit the secretion of the natural poison of the species. There is also room to believe, from the protracted duration of the fatal cases, that the snake in question was not one of a very venomous family of cobras.

TABLE TALK.

WE can hardly hope that our article on "Spelling," published last week, has already borne fruit. However, we are glad to see the question is being discussed, earnestly and ably. The other evening, at the Social Science Association's meeting, Mr. E. Jones read a paper on "Spelling Reform," in which he stated his views on the subject. We are not about to repeat them here, but simply to note that it is not only our everyday spelling that stands in need of amendment. We cull this flower from the *Times* of Saturday, March 26. It occurs in an article on the trial of Prince Pierre Bonaparte, and has reference to the Fonvielle episode:—

"The Attorney-General then addressed the Court, calling upon *them* to *avenge* its outraged majesty. Laurier, the advocate of the Noir family, pleaded the Prince's insulting mood in extenuation of Fonvielle's offence. The Court again retired, and, after more than an hour's consultation, it *resumed its seats*, the President giving sentence that Fonvielle," &c.

We need hardly add that the italics are our own.

IN THE "TABLE TALK" for February 19th (p. 66), attention was called to an ancient portrait of Edward VI., preserved in the chantry of St. Mary's Church, Kidderminster, and it might be gathered, from the remarks there made, that the painter of this portrait was surmised to be Holbein. A copy of the *Kidderminster Times* for March 5th has been sent to us, in which there is a statement that this picture—which is confidently said to be "The portrait by Hans Holbein of Edward VI."—is now to be cleaned and restored by Mr. Kennedy, the master of the Government Art School, at the expense of the vicar of the parish, the Rev. G. D. Boyle. An original portrait of Richard Baxter—also hanging in the chantry—is also to be restored and cleaned by Mr. Kennedy, at Mr. Boyle's expense. Mr. Boyle very recently gave, in the chantry, an appreciative and able lecture on Baxter. It may be truly said that Baxter's works are his best monument; yet, in these days of paying honour to celebrities in the shape of statues and memorials, it is somewhat singular that England should be without any public statue to the world-known author of "The Saint's Rest," and the "Call to the Unconverted." We believe we are correct in asserting that the only public memorial in all England, raised in remembrance

of Richard Baxter, is a massive obelisk, with a suitable inscription on its plinth, built on a commanding situation on Blakeshall Common, four miles from Kidderminster, by Wm. Hancocks, Esq., of Blakeshall House. If every reader and admirer of Baxter were to contribute one penny towards a monument to his memory, what a large sum would be obtained! Subscriptions are now being raised to place a memorial over the remains of Daniel De Foe, in the restored burial-ground of Bunhill-fields, and it is to be hoped that, by the time of the May meetings, a sufficient amount may have been realised to complete the project. Could not the promoters and supporters of those same May meetings inaugurate a national subscription for a public monument to Richard Baxter? Surely, if the author of "Robinson Crusoe" deserves a statue, the author of "The Saint's Rest" also merits a like honour; and Richard Baxter has had to wait for it longer than Daniel De Foe.

THE AUTHOR OF "FESTUS" would seem to have wandered into "blind hysterics" in the poem which he has contributed to the March number of a contemporary. The poem is written in blank verse. We say nothing as to the jest that this species of verse is best adapted for the conveyance of blank ideas; but, at any rate, we expect that the ten-syllable iambic lines should be marked with poetic rhythm. Yet we meet with such lines as these:—

"And founts rock-smitten of God, the spirit sincere,
Insensible of limits, may grow to feel
Like broad simplicity. . . . to feel

Our spirits collateral flow with time's broad flood,
Even as our hearts'-blood coursing age, like pulsed
With earth's unhesitant streams."

The poem in which these lines occur is called "The Mystery of Life," but the chief mystery about it is how the author of "Festus" could pen such prose run wild.

IN A BOOK EDITED for the Camden Society by Mr. Durrant Cooper, is an account of the expenses of two judges who travelled "the Oxford circuit" in the year 1601, and, according to custom, received presents of provisions in each town on their route. Among the presents of game, mention is made of "two hernshaws" and "six puetts." The former were young herons; and, when Hamlet (ii., 2) says, "I know a hawk from a handsaw!" it seems more probable that

he would say, "I know a hawk from a hernshaw;" which reading has sometimes been adopted. We remember it once being thus delivered on the stage—we believe by Mr. Barry Sullivan—"I know a hawk from a hern! Psha!" With regard to the "six puetts," these were lapwings, familiarly called pewitts, from their cry "pee-witt!" or, as country folk-lore would phrase it, "be-witched!" Puett, probably, is the old pronunciation; and it is still preserved in the eastern counties. Tennyson, as a Lincolnshire man, must have been familiar with this pronunciation; and, indeed, makes the word to rhyme with "cruet," in Will Waterproof's lyrical monologue describing the head-waiter of "The Cock:"

"We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,
Would quarrel with our lot;
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruet."

THE WORK ABOVE MENTIONED also refers to the javelin-men—who, in those days, were a necessity, in order to protect the judges from the attacks of the mob—and to other curious particulars, including the gaolers' custom of collecting money in a *boot* for pointing out to visitors those malefactors who were condemned to death. In connection with this subject, I would say that, in a scarce work, called "The Mobiad; or, Battle of the Voice"—being a description of "an Exeter election" in the year 1737—is the following couplet:—

"Ten cashless debtors in that dreary cave,
Yclep'd the shoe more free a breathing have."

To which is appended this explanatory note:—"The shoe. So is called a little close room in Southgate prison, where such poor insolvent debtors as can't pay for lodgings are crowded or crushed in together. It seems to have received its denomination from the privilege they, in turn, have of begging charity of passers-by; they, by a cord, letting down an old shoe to receive the same" (p. 169).

ABOUT THIRTY YEARS AGO, the Rev. R. C—— held a living in the West of England, where an old man and his wife had for many years fulfilled the respective offices of parish clerk and pew-opener. The old pair were of that steady, orthodox type, which the past

generation sometimes met with, who have not unfrequently been glorified in immortal verse. They identified themselves with the established customs of the parish, and took an intermediate position in parochial affairs between the vicar and the churchwardens. Ritualism, intoning, open seats, the observance of saints' days, and so forth, aggrieved not the parishioners. The "Old Hundredth" every Sunday, and Sternhold and Hopkins always, was the "'stablish varshon." At the appointed periods old Isaac left his desk, and proceeding, with little haste and great noise, up the gallery stairs, came to the front and gave out the psalm "to the praise and glory of God." Then, with a few introductory grunts upon a bass-viol, he sawed and sang one or other of three tunes, selected in all fairness, and adapted to the alternate use of long, short, and common measures. In this staunch Protestant parish anything so wicked as preaching in the surplice never entered the head of the incumbent. The little church, too, was no fold for modern shepherding, and was far too small for broad theology. It contained four extra-high pews, claiming at least one-third of the parish salvation, and vying with each other in the somniferous adjuncts to the sermon. These pews were—No. 1, the college pew, belonging to Worcester College, Oxford, patrons of the living: this was generally occupied by the Archdeacon of —, who resided in the parish; No. 2 belonged to the squire of the parish, who was the largest landholder; and Nos. 3 and 4 were comparatively modern erections, appropriated by two squireens, who had erst retired from Bristolian pursuits and dignities, and now enjoyed their Sunday *otium cum* great *dignitate*. All this pleased old Isaac and his wife very much; because, in addition to the importance of officiating to such personages, there was—as the old lady expressed herself—"something to be gied away." The vicar, who had no tendency to depart from the old ways, was a great stickler for order and respectability, and always appeared in strict canonical costume. Off duty he wore knee-breeches and gaiters, lute-string vest, single-breasted coat, and shovel hat. On duty, long cassock and gown of the stiffest silk. Of these he possessed two suits. One, which he brought in the bloom of newness when he came to the parish, had fallen into a state of rustiness incompatible with his idea of respectability, and was cast off. Old

Isaac also, like the best of silks, had become very rusty, and one Sunday was absent from his duty; before the next he was laid in his grave. Upon this somewhat sudden event the vicar visited the widow to give her consolation, assure her of the continued enjoyment of her office, and to present her with the faded canonicals, which, as he said, "would make her decent mourning." On the following Sunday, as the vicar entered the church, he perceived a sensation among the congregation, almost amounting to laughter, the cause of which was apparent when he proceeded to the vestry. There he found the old widow ready to perform the attiring duty of her late husband—herself, in a mood of conscious pride, dressed up in the complete suit of canonicals she had received. "Good heavens!" exclaimed the vicar; "how could you be guilty of such an impropriety as to make use of these things without suitable alteration?" "Dear me, sir," replied the old lady, "I hope you won't be angry; but I couldna find in my heart to make a 'mommuck'—[local word for a "mess"]—of these blessed murnin' robes that my dear Isaac had put on and off your reverence for so many years."

SOME GOOD OUGHT TO COME OUT OF THE recent revelations regarding the foul adulterants of the air we breathe, for the knowledge of evil naturally prompts the search after means to avert its consequences. What Professor Tyndall had to say upon atmospheric organisms we all heard, for his revelations were made much of. Not so the antecedent and subsequent disclosures by others who had not his means of securing popular attention. There are those of Dr. Angus Smith, of Manchester, who has been studying the subject for a quarter of a century, and has examined with microscopic attention the constitution of what he aptly designates "the sewage of the atmosphere"; studying the nature of the "atomes," and measuring the quantity that we take into our lungs. He has found that the air of every locality is charged with the detritus of whatever material is being manipulated thereabouts. The city man inhales iron from horses' shoes and wheel tires, along with stone dust and horse refuse; the inhabitant of a cotton-spinning town breathes in filaments of the fibre that is being worked about him; the dweller in the coal districts absorbs minute black diamonds; the rail-

way traveller has his throat bombarded with flakes of iron; and all of them, all of us, take poison in the shape of dormant germs of animal and plant life, which can be made to throw off their torpor and spring into active being by a few days' steeping in water. Then what we exhale! A drop of condensed breath from the wall of a crowded room develops into a busy scene of life. We are always giving out organisms. Dr. Ransome, another Manchester air-analyst, finds that an adult emits three grains weight thereof in a day, contained in ten ounces of aqueous vapour. This may not seem much; but it was found sufficient to render the liquid highly decomposable. Doubtless, in healthy times this lung-refuse does no harm: it may, or it may not; we have no means of judging; for we cannot tell what small disorders might vanish if we were for a season to breathe air chemically pure. But it is when disease appears that the danger comes; then it is that the seed sown broadcast by one or two infected persons taints the air far and wide with miasma. What is the remedy? It seems impossible to suggest one. Yet, at a late meeting of the French Academy, a proposal was made in the direction of a cure for a part at least of the evil. It will be evident that hospitals must cast into their surrounding atmosphere a vast amount of vitiated air, which must play some part in the spread of infection. This limpid poison might be easily arrested, and without interfering with the ventilation of the building. All that is necessary is to make the air pass through fire on its way out of the sick ward. Tyndall showed his audience that the organisms are entirely destroyed by moderate heat; and it may be that a knowledge of the purifying effects of fire prompted our forefathers to keep blazing logs in the sick room. One M. Woestyn was the proposer of this new system of hospital ventilation, and the form of apparatus by which he would endeavour to effect it was simply a series of gas burners, so placed that the issuing air must blow over them. He would have this system used at all times for hospitals; and during epidemics he would extend it in some form to infected private dwellings. The good reception which his proposals received may be taken as an indication of the importance which the assembly attached to them.

The authors of the articles in "ONCE A WEEK" reserve to themselves the right of translation.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

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THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY.

By PERCY FITZGERALD.

CHAPTER III.



AT D I P-
CHESTER
the Theatre
Royal was a
very modest
house of en-
tertainment,
and de-
served the
term of con-
tempt which
some of the
profession
were fond of
applying to
it—viz., its
being “a
mere band-
box.” It had
a pleasant,

old-fashioned air. The boxes or galleries had been rather out of shape; the pit was little bigger than a goodly-sized cockpit; and there was a genuine old green curtain, of the true coarse tone, which has long ago gone out. But there was in full force the true bouquet or flavour of rank gas, or sawdust, drifting down little tunnels of passages, all ablaze with flaring lights—a bouquet which is enjoyed most in purely country theatres; which, could their old walls speak, whether now turned into Dissenters' chapels or corn stores, could tell of more real enjoyment and heartier laughter than ever rose through the stately “auditorium” of a London house.

A little crowd was round the doors. A

meagre awning sloped down over the little cabin stairs of the chief entrance, and some tar was blazing in bowls at each side. There was a glimpse through the narrow door of some striped red calico, and at times a glimpse of the interior of the house itself; for one all but passed from the street into the boxes.

Here at last was the sound of wheels, and here were three carriages of company from Benbow dashing up—their lamps like dragons' eyes, their footmen in long cloaks, and panels gleaming like armour. Out came Mr. Haggerston, bursting from behind pink and white calico—as he had burst often before, on false alarms—and received the august party at the foot of the little cabin stairs. Down they were set—stately Duke and his host, both—ribbons across, clouds of tulle and flowers on ducal daughter; while the cheerful young men of the party bounded out of the small brougham that brought up the tail of the procession, not caring about being squeezed. The little steps—much decayed—creaked under the ducal feet, while Mr. Haggerston, in full dress, led the way round the squeezed little passage to the extemporised private box next the stage—striped calico attending them all the way; and there a gaunt servant in a faded stage livery, who had brought in more “dummy” letters than he had ever done real ones, crouched against the wall. The little interior was crowded. Every eye in that first curve—which held about six boxes—was turned to the distinguished party, and the five musicians in the little pen called the orchestra struck up a complimentary tune. It was really “a grand night” for the theatre, such as it had never known before, and was fondly looked back to by the manager and his company; for what with extra lighting, and cleaning, and calico, the little house had never looked so festive.

The august—almost royal—party were

late, and had kept the audience waiting. So bills were at once placed before them, when the party, with many smiles, saw that their own names had been made "to draw" as well as the players'. It was all "under the distinguished patronage of his Grace the Duke of Banffshire; the Right Hon. Pelham Benbow, M.P., of Benbow Castle; Sir William Benbow, late one of Her Majesty's Indian judges; Charles Benbow, Esq.; and the Right Hon. J. Hoxter." They also read that Pauline, in the cast of the "immortal Bulwer Lytton," was to be played by Miss Lydia Effingham, and Claude by Mr. Hulkes.

The august visitors found great entertainment in looking round the house, and in identifying the curious figures that were clustered there. Stalls had been laid out in the pit, which only left three or four rows of seats for the regular clients; but the people to whom they were sacrificed had their punishment in strained necks, twisted round all the night long to the left, to observe the movements of the august party. There was no tendency to laugh at any rusticity in these honest rustics of the district, as vulgar in great people as the vulgarity they are amused at; but young Charles Benbow, seated by the Lady Rosa—carrying out his special duty—gave the names of the figures seated round, and little sketches. That night might have been a favourable opportunity for completing his father's darling scheme; but that cautious diplomatist thought the aristocratic pear not yet ripe, and had carefully warned his son to abstain. It had been better had he let events take their own course: all had been well for him, and this little narrative not been written. The youth, in truth, flattered by a consideration which was new to him, was eager; and in that light, and the excitement of the evening, invested her with charms which were not her own. She, too, was pleased with his natural and boyish homage, and smiled a natural smile as he gave names and little histories of the neighbours about them. In the private box opposite, that florid-faced, coarse-looking young man, with diamond studs, was young Hunter, who had not long come in for the great cotton mills—a vulgar-minded upstart—who was sitting there with two "flappers," run in the same mould, beside him. His creed in life was to get everything by *paying*, and by paying the largest price. That large party in the

centre was the Muggeridge family, leading people of the town: he, the rich local solicitor; she, a great, oval-shaped, crimson egg—flaming in face, and flowers, and opera-cloak—surrounded with a family of coloured Easter eggs. There was the doctor's family; the clergyman's daughters—who, on this occasion, waived the severe principles of their profession, and came to see the rare spectacle of a duke in the theatre. But now the curtain had gone up, and "the immortal Bulwer Lytton" set in.

The young and too presumptuous Claude—the "gee-ardener's son," as he was called through the piece, and he could not fairly complain, as he so spake of himself—was discovered to be rather elderly, his bare throat displayed in a boyish fashion, which only exhibited a disagreeable, crude redness, and the cordage of muscles. This gentleman's rapturous juvenility and amorousness seemed very diverting, and a smile was on the ducal features as he bade his mother "embrace her boy." But all was expectation as the scene opened where the new Pauline was expected to come on. All faces were turned eagerly to the stage; and a charming girl, with bright eyes, and dressed with as much taste and propriety as if she were going to a ball, came on modestly and slowly. A torrent of applause welcomed her. It was renewed as she made a curtsy—half indifferent, half gracious, and wholly unstagy. Her face beamed with a bright intelligence; and the contrast of her own pure self with the tawdry dresses, the smirched faces of those about, and even the dirty and rickety background, made her look like a princess visiting a hovel.

The Duke said to his neighbour, "Quite a lady!—we can know one when we see her."

The Lady Rosa's pale face bore a smile of disdain and hostility, while Mr. Hoxter and the gentlemen applauded boisterously. The young Benbow kept his eyes fixed on her, as on some vision—his cheeks glowing, his pulses fluttering.

The play went on: the gee-ardener's son, now all velvet and spangles, striding about and mouthing round the beautiful heroine, seeming like her groom—and a dirty one too—dressed up in finery; and General (Haggerston) Damas delivering his military jokes with a strange inattention to his companions, always keeping his face twisted round to the right, and addressing his speeches entirely

to the Duke—the Duke of the audience. When the attractive Pauline spoke, what a tingling music rang through the house! how ears were drooped to catch every sound! In the scene where the groom-gee-ardener has brought her to a home, which corresponded to the one Mr. Hulkes was personally more familiar with, what passionate upbraidings, what charming gestures, as she covered her face with her veil and sank down and wept! Then her cry of anguish, as Mr. Hulkes rushed away to the wars, made Mr. Hoxter turn round to the Duke, and say, seriously, “This is very fine, really, very fine”—much as he would turn round in another House and praise a new speaker. Young Benbow, as the act finished, put his hands forward over the box and applauded noisily; while even the Lady Rosa had a faint flush on her cheeks, and said, “She reminded her a little of Drogé.” One only of the party was uninterested—Mr. Benbow—whose quick, bright eye roved from face to face of his party, and, noticing his son’s enthusiasm, he moved quietly down into the seat behind him.

“Nothing so wonderful, Lady Rosa,” he said; “and Charles has seen little or no acting”—and at the same moment gave him a firm and quiet pressure with his finger.

Now there is a roar of applause, demanding the favourite; and Mr. Hulkes, scowling and in ill-humour, comes out by himself; and, when he has disappeared, Mr. Haggerston, in person, and in the full uniform of General Damas (which suggests the idea that British officers were serving with the French armies), leads in the charming actress. She is now very different—sweeps across with a chilling *hauteur*—a kind of unresponsive indifference—as if she cared nothing for them or their tributes.

A hurried dialogue passed in the “royal” box.

“We should throw her a bouquet,” said Mr. Hoxter.

The Officer on the stage—who had never taken his eyes off the distinguished party, in a fixed and stony gaze—guessed what was passing, and lingered; while the eager Charles, standing up, frantically applauded.

She gave a gracious curtsy in acknowledgment, and disappeared; whilst the youth remained standing—his hands on the front of the box, and he himself in a sort of abstraction.

“How splendid! How magnificent!” he

said at last. “I never saw anything to approach it.”

He then got up suddenly and left the box. His father looked round hastily as the door closed; but he was too late. There was a general chorus of approbation in that circle, and Mr. Hoxter declared loudly she ought to be “in town.”

The young man, once out in the corridor, fanned his excited face with his handkerchief; then, with hesitation, tapped at a side-door which led on to the stage. He asked for Mr. Haggerston, and found that gentleman in the full regimentals of a French general of division—which seemed all tricolour sash, boots, and breeches—and giving impetuous orders to his dependants, as if he were indeed upon the field of battle.

“There’s a triumph! There’s genius! Mr. Benbow. That went home to my lord Duke’s soul. I saw it. I know it did.”

“They were all delighted, Haggerston. By the way, I was going to ask you, would you mind—” and he dropped his voice and whispered.

“To be sure. Perfect lady, you know. Rather touchy, in fact. But I’ll speak to her.”

Mr. Haggerston presently returned, and led the way to a little crib known as the dressing-room.

Pauline rose up to receive; while a grave lady, older by ten years than she was, looked on with suspicion. Mr. Haggerston then performed an introduction.

The youth, now that he was close beside her, saw that she had a natural, everyday loveliness, far beyond what he had seen in her on the stage. He felt the very blood rushing to his heart and cheeks.

“I was so enchanted,” he faltered, “so interested, I could not take my eyes away a moment.”

“I remarked you,” she said, smiling at this natural confusion. “You were in that box to the right. Your steady look made me play better.”

“Oh, it makes me so *proud* to hear that, Miss Effingham. I forgot the theatre, where I was, and who I was with.”

“Who was that lady next you—so cold and indifferent to my poor exertions? Only for you I should have been quite paralyzed by her.”

“The Duke’s daughter, Lady Rosa Fulke. She has seen so many plays, you will understand, Miss Effingham—”

"Yes. They all know the 'Lady of Lyons' by heart. You have seen it a thousand times."

"No, indeed; never before. But if you, Miss Effingham, act it a thousand times here, I shall go every night. How long will you stay?"

"A fortnight. Of course, contingent—" and she smiled. "The doors of these country theatres sometimes shut so very abruptly. But you are really pleased with me? What can I do here? I might as well act in a drawing-room. I want room, space, air—the vast stage, like a great field; and, far away, the dim, lofty—not *sea*, but *cloud*, of faces rising up. Oh, if I had that chance, Mr. Benbow, you would see something very different from what you see to-night."

"Oh, I have seen acting," the young man said, eagerly; "but could not see anything more fine than yours!"

Mr. Haggerston struck in—"Miss Effingham is bringing the house down. I kept my eye on his Grace when I was joking you in the garden scene, and every point seemed to go home to him, you know. I assure you, you were tip-top; and—do me justice—I led well up to you."

She seemed to shrink away from these compliments.

"I was not thinking of any person—Duke or anyone else; and, to tell you the truth, I am more pleased with the praise this gentleman has bestowed on me, than with any of the compliments which I suppose will be sent to me after this is over."

A tap at the door.

This conversation might, under other conditions, have seemed a very strange and odd one. Mr. Haggerston, with his false moustache and beard—so palpably stuck on—his coarse stage uniform, sash, &c. But Charles was in a sort of dream, and even delirium—his eyes fixed on the features of the beautiful actress.

The knock at the door was repeated impatiently.

General Damas leisurely went and "threw it open," as he would call it.

The coarse, bony manufacturer stood there, in the glory of his chains, rings, &c., and bowing and smirking.

"Beg pardon, Haggerston," he said; "just want you to do a bit of the polite. Introduce me to the charming and fascinating young lady who has been obliging us all to-night."

Mr. Haggerston did what was desired, with intense enthusiasm.

"Mr. Hunter, Miss—a true patron of the drama, and of everything that belongs to it."

"Oh come, I say, Hag—put in discriminating. You never get a five shillings out of me when you have any of your common, coarse people coming round. But I declare, when you secure such an attraction—"

The haughty look, mingled with contempt, which he received, checked this flow of compliment. She then turned to Charles.

"That is the invariable sort of praise I always receive. You would be surprised at the number of times I have heard it."

"I say, Hag," went on the other, not in the least abashed, "you'll have to raise the allowance; and don't you spare him, Miss Effingham—he's rolling in money."

"Mr. Haggerston's arrangements and mine have been already settled," she said, quite gravely. "I have no wish to change them."

"Oh, that was only my fun, you know," said the objectionable young manufacturer; "and what I would do if I were Haggerston. I think a cool hundred a week would be the least I'd offer you."

The young man had been listening impatiently. He had the slight acquaintance with the manufacturer which everyone in or about a country town has to fornia and keep up. He could not restrain himself any longer; but said, with flushing cheeks, "No one is thinking of these commercial views at all. Miss Effingham does not care about them."

"It is rather hard," she added, "considering all that is before me in the next acts. This gentleman takes away all the poetry of my art from me."

"Oh, well," said Mr. Hunter, much put out, "that is what is looked to, you know, in the profession."

"Yes," said Charles, "by the low sort—the people who make it a trade."

"O, I ate those chaffering, peddling fellows that come to me sometimes," said Mr. Haggerston, heartily endorsing this sentiment. "No one has an idea the way we managers are victimised; we are literally poorer than the fellow there that I employ to sweep my stage. We never get a real good bargain; for, if they make ever so little of a success, then they turn greedy—greedy; want two pounds a week more—may be, this very night before

the drop is down, on just some twopenny-halfpenny calls which I have got up myself. I assure you, the meanness, the dirt—the dirt, sir—that's in the profession, you wouldn't believe! Bless my soul, but you can't stay talking here, and keep his Grace waiting. Now then, Miss Effingham, when you're ready I am."

"Let me offer you my arm, Miss Effingham," said young Mr. Benbow, "and bring you to the wing."

Mr. Hunter was abashed and angry. He could buy and sell young Benbow, and, for that matter—as he said to his friend later in the boxes—any strolling actress like that. But he was dreadfully put out. "I'll give her a lesson yet, and that cock-sparrow too. But she *is* infernal handsome!" And under his elaborately-worked shirt-front, his swinging gold chains, and glossy suit, he was mortified. He was deeply touched with her charms. But he told his admiring friend and flapper—quite after the nature of his kind—that "she was a tip-top splendid girl."

"And you made the running. Don't tell me—she was making eyes at you all the time of the play!"

Clumsy as this sort of compliment is, few men can withstand it; and, though his rebuff was ranking in his mind, he gave way to the pleasant delusion that some such gratifying success as had been described had taken place.

As Mr. Benbow led the actress through the dark places by the edge of the scenes, peopled with what seemed unclean spectres, the pride and fluttering of his heart was indescribable. He felt that he was, as it were, leading some rich and rare Queen, greater than any of the Deschappelles family; and he found himself standing with her, a sudden and dazzling glare pouring in upon him. Then someone came and whispered her; and in a moment he found himself alone—heard the sudden burst of applause, as it were, at a distance—and knew that the enchanting Pauline was again entangled in that passionate love adventure, of which, alas!—and a thousand times alas!—he was not the hero. That dreadful, dirty, scrubby, degraded Hulkes, to dare, even by the necessities of stage action, to assume the character of even a sham lover!

In the glare of this coarse stage light he was standing, his eyes fixed on her who now absorbed his whole soul; but he never thought that he was in full view of the box

where the august party were sitting. When, for a moment or two, he had withdrawn his gaze from the divine creature who was so gallantly cleaving to the absent gee-ardener's son"—then winning his grade under the French flag—he became conscious that he had been in full view of the distinguished party in the box; and thought, with some confusion, of his father, who might have seen him leading the charming actress to the wing; and he hurried round at once to take his place in the box. He stole in as softly as he could, and came into his old place.

"We saw you," said the Duke's daughter. "You seem to have acquaintances behind the scenes."

"Not at all," he said, hurriedly. "It was only that Haggerston, who would introduce me."

"Introduce you!" she repeated, scornfully; "and is *that* done behind the scenes?"

Without looking back, he felt—and felt most uncomfortably—that his father's eyes were on him, piercing into his very skull. He made a feint at exaggerated devotion and eager attention; but all the time the entrancing Pauline's history was going on; and here was that odious Hulkes, returned from the wars, hiding his ill-rasped cheeks—as every Claude invariably does—behind that enormous colonel's plume of white feathers. There had been a sweet constancy about her, a gentle, womanly tenderness indescribable; filial to her parents—Mr. J. S. Webb and Mrs. Charles Walterby—and enduring the hearty jesting of that old officer, General Haggerston Damas; and now she was flying into the arms of Hulkes with a woman's passionate enthusiasm.

Charles could think of no Duke's daughter then. As the applause broke out, he forgot all his father's splendid plans, and, turning eagerly to her, said—"And look, she only *appears* to embrace him. How cleverly done! She is a true lady, and does not allow that fellow's dirty fingers to touch her dress even. Haggerston told me that a really nice actress will not allow such a thing. 'There is 'lady' stamped upon her in everything she does.'"

The Lady Rosa turned in her seat to look at him, with a stare of astonishment. "I know nothing of these people and their ways. But I believe no lady could bring herself to go on the stage."

Then it was over—the curtain down, and the audience calling for that divine creature. Mr. Hunter was "roaring for her," and clap-

ping, standing up in his box, young Mr. Benbow noticed, as she was coming out, led by Mr. Haggerston.

Again an uprising—a cheering.

Mr. Hoxter said, "I declare we ought to throw her a bouquet. If Covent-garden were near, she would deserve a guinea one."

Charles again forgot all that was about him, and the duty before him. He heard these words. "O, yes," he said, eagerly, "we must throw her one. It will be too late, if we are not quick." He stooped down, scarcely knowing what he was doing. "Would you eternally oblige me—let me take yours now, and to-morrow the finest that Covent-garden—"

"By all means; it was you who gave it to me, so you have the right—"

Only a second more, and the divine apparition would have disappeared. Someone was holding aside the old green baize "rag." He could not have checked himself if it was to save himself from death.

"Oh, thank you, thank you," he said; and, seizing the bouquet, threw it. It landed at her feet. Mr. Haggerston bounded at it, and took it up in the laboriously gallant way which is *de rigueur* on these occasions. It was presented to her, and she curtsied, as Mr. Hoxter owned, "like a lady. Some Dean's daughter—commonest thing in the world."

The Duke laughed—he was mentally short-sighted—and said, "See, Rosa has made him throw her bouquet."

It was over. The august party were not going to wait for the afterpiece, even though the funny man—the leading *comique* of the theatre—was going to give his Jeremy Diddler—his great part. August parties never wait for afterpieces—as, indeed, Mr. Haggerston good-naturedly prophesied to his *comique*. As they all rose—every eye in the theatre on them—some of the local fashionables felt it would be provincial and unbecoming to remain, and so they began to rise also; and the unhappy *comique* had to play his great part to a very thin audience indeed.

Mr. Haggerston was in attendance, having made a frantic toilette to be in time; the stage servant was in waiting, and unrolling an old bit of stage carpeting; there was the plunging of horses, and drawing-up of carriages. Then they drove away; and the great bespoken performance, long talked of in the theatre, was over.

SNAKE-BITES AND THEIR ANTIDOTES.—PART II.

In the *Englishman* of the 5th August, a very interesting series of experiments, undertaken by Dr. Fayrer, of Calcutta, was published. They seem to have been carried on with the greatest care; and were valuable, both from the variety of antidote which came under consideration, and also from the fact of their being conducted by professional men alone, who were, consequently, well qualified to administer the remedies to the greatest advantage. A fowl was bitten by a cobra (not a fresh one, and which had bitten before). It died in seven minutes, although treated with fifteen drops of strong "Condy's solution," injected by a hypodermic syringe.

A dog was then bitten by a cobra under similar circumstances. In seventeen and a half minutes he fell over. Sixty drops of liq. ammonia, sp. gr. '959, were injected into the crural vein. No improvement was apparent. Forty drops more were injected after the lapse of ten minutes. In twenty-five minutes the dog was dead.

The external jugular vein of a dog was exposed: forty drops of the liq. potas. permanganate (Condy's) were injected. After thirteen minutes had elapsed he was bitten by a large cobra (not fresh, and which had bitten before, and had been some time in captivity). In one minute the bitten leg was partially paralysed. In two minutes he lay down. After four minutes forty more drops of the same fluid were injected: no improvement effected. After twenty-four minutes forty more drops were administered: still there was no change for the better. In thirty-seven minutes the dog was dead.

A dog's external jugular vein was exposed. Four drops of the poison of a somewhat weakly cobra were injected. One drop may have been lost: the remaining three entered the system. The dog was treated with sixty drops of ammonia, injected into the jugular vein. No amendment ensued, and the dog died in fifty-five minutes.

The jugular vein of a dog was exposed. He was then bitten in the thigh by a fresh cobra. In one minute symptoms of distress were visible. Within six minutes of the infliction of the wound he was treated with a solution of quinine: sixty drops were injected of a strength of one grain in eight

drops. No amendment occurred. In eleven minutes the dog was dead.

Equal parts of cobra poison and liq. ammonia, sp. gr. '959, were mixed together, and fifteen drops of the mixed fluid were injected with the hypodermic syringe into a pigeon's thigh. The pigeon died in two minutes. This is very unfavourable to the theory of the antidotal action of liq. ammonia.

Ten drops of fresh cobra poison were injected into the jugular vein of a full-grown dog. Within one minute sixty drops of ammonia were injected; but the action of the poison was so rapid that the dog died almost before the second injection could be completed. In seventy seconds he was dead. This shows the frightful virulence of the poison when administered in a large blood-vessel in large quantities. Dr. Fayrer here observes: "How can such a death be explained, except by exhaustion of the nerve centres? Any theory of blood-change is surely totally inapplicable here."

A pariah dog was bitten in the fore-arm by a cobra. A ligature, which had been previously placed loosely above the part bitten, was immediately tightened, and the actual cautery of the wound was performed by a piece of pointed steel heated to red heat. In ten minutes the dog became restless and staggered. Ammonia was injected into the jugular vein. The symptoms became aggravated, and death ensued in forty-three minutes, in spite of the careful application of the ligature.

A second dog, smaller than the first, was bitten, and received similar treatment, with the exception of the application of ammonia. He died in thirty-five minutes.

The cobra which had already caused the death of the former of these two dogs was made to bite seven fowls and one pigeon in quick succession. Of these seven died: and the eighth, though showing symptoms of suffering, eventually recovered. It is curious to notice the gradually diminishing virulence of the poison on each successive occasion. The first fowl died in three minutes, the second in ten, the third in eleven, the fourth (a very large one) in seventeen, the fifth in twenty-two, the pigeon in forty-two, the sixth fowl in forty-nine minutes.

Dr. Fayrer remarks:—"The cobra was neither a very large, nor a very vigorous one, and yet how deadly! Eight creatures destroyed by a rapid succession of bites!

The experiment proves that the snake becomes weaker by biting, until he becomes exhausted."

Other experiments, bearing less on the main object of this article, were also entered upon. A viper was bitten by a cobra, but no ill effects followed. A cobra was then made to bite itself on the tail; he also suffered no ill effects. A cobra was bitten by another of the same species, but with similar results.

An attempt was also made to discover if the poison of one kind of snake could be used as the antidote against the power of another species. With this view a cat was bitten by a viper, and a few minutes afterwards by a cobra. The cat died in the usual time, and there was nothing apparent to show that the virulence of the poison was either arrested or stimulated by the variety of poison.

A most exhaustive variety of antidotes were made use of in the course of experiment, yet with what a disastrous result! The deadliness of the poison, and the utter inability of the remedies to cope with it, is clearly demonstrated; and the knowledge thus gained leads one to suppose that the recorded instances of cure are the exception—when the deadliness of the poison has become exhausted by previous attacks; or when sickness, or want of vigour, may have impaired its power of injury; or, lastly, when the poison penetrates so superficially as not to be absorbed into the inner vessels of the system.

Dr. Fayrer's remarks are so much to the point that I do not hesitate to insert them.

"My belief is, that if an animal, and probably a man, is fairly bitten by a fresh and really vigorous cobra, or daboia—[I believe this is a kind of viper]—it or he will inevitably succumb, unless some immediate and direct method of arresting the entry of the poison into the circulation be practised. That such may be done I will not deny; but the two experiments just recorded—[referring to the case in which ligature had been employed, and actual cautery inflicted, without success]—performed with the greatest care by two surgeons accustomed to such operations, shows that at least it is very difficult. . . . The same may be said of the actual cautery. Unless the hot iron enter the puncture directly after the fang has been withdrawn, the poison is already far on its way towards the centre; and the

burning, though it destroys the tissues and such of the poison as may not have entered the circulation, can have no influence upon that which is already beyond its reach. . . . To conceive an antidote, in the true sense of the term, to snake-poison, one must imagine a substance so subtle as to follow, overtake, and neutralize the venom in the blood, or that shall have the power of counteracting and neutralizing the deadly influence it has exerted on the vital forces. Such a substance has still to be found, and our present experience of the action of drugs does not lead to hopeful anticipation that we shall find it."

It was a matter of regret that, while making the experiment of an injection of equal parts of cobra poison and ammonia, that of carbolic acid and the same poison mixed should have escaped the notice of the experimenters. Suggestions to this effect were ventilated, and a hope was expressed that this phase of the experiment would receive attention at some subsequent time. It was stated that the effect of a small quantity of carbolic acid, administered internally, was an almost instantaneous death to the cobra. In less than two minutes all self-directed vitality and power of movement is destroyed, and the paralyzed form only writhes in involuntary contortion. In a very short time all motion is suspended, and the snake lies stone dead. It was argued (but, it must be confessed, it is not at all a necessary sequence) that, the effect of the internal application being so decisive, it might have a counteracting effect as an antidote. Though the supposition was supported by no conclusive law of induction, it was hoped that a trial would be made, as in certain quarters considerable confidence was displayed in the antidotal action of this acid; and it was suggested that the point should be settled determinately in a manner similar to that which proved so fatal to the pretensions of ammonia—namely, by its administration in conjunction with the poison by injection. I am not aware that this has ever been attempted; but a trial sufficiently similar was made by Dr. Fayer, at the instance of these suggestions. The cobra poison was, in the first place, injected into the jugular vein of a dog, and in almost immediate succession one of carbolic acid was applied; but not with any favourable result, or giving evidence of any amelioration or any counter-action to the virus.

If we consider the facts which these recent experiments have demonstrated, we are irresistibly led to the conclusion that a man stands a very poor chance if he have the misfortune to be bitten by any of the more venomous of the family of snakes. With the best professional aid at hand at the moment of occurrence, the chances of escape are almost infinitesimal; and under unfavourable conditions, when a man is by himself, and without a drug on which he can depend, his life is as surely forfeited as if he had hurled himself off the Tarpeian Rock, or tested the theory of gravitation from the dome of St. Paul's. We have every reason to be thankful that snakes are timid, and not naturally aggressive animals, and also that their attacks are, from their formation and the nature of their movements, limited to the lower extremities, which are in a great measure protected either by leather or loose thick cloth; and, thirdly, that their fangs, though so exquisitely keen, are not sufficiently long to penetrate a strong, stout substance, such as the above. A sportsman who never neglects the precaution of being stoutly shod, and equally protected by cloth or leather integuments to the knee, has not much to fear from the ordinary run of snakes. True, there are some venomous types which inhabit trees, and drop on their unwary victims; but I am of opinion that their number is very much overrated, and the localities in which they exist very restricted in limits. The natural love for horrors, which is an invariable weakness among ignorant, superstitious people, multiplies realities a hundredfold. The same gentleman who related the anecdote of the twenty-seven raging cobras in the rice-fields, co-inhabitants in the uninviting swamps with the snipe, recounted to me, in his usually graphically descriptive style, the horrors of a little snake which haunts trees in a certain district of India. A retainer of his had occasion to climb up into a tree, in a small hole of which the little monster had established his *Penates*. In spite of exceeding diminutiveness, he at once attacked the invader with such rapidity and determination that there was no escape for the unhappy man. The results were fearful and immediate: as the thunder follows the flash, so was the cause and effect in rapid sequence. Down the tree the victim fell headlong, and the dull thud which an-

nounced that his body had reached the earth was that of a corpse. There is room for presumption that the fall might have had something to do with such a fatal result; but my informant hastened to remove any misapprehension there might have been on this point, by unhesitatingly ascribing the whole catastrophe to the subtle venom, which had completed its work with the speed of electricity. Still, calm reflection has induced me to conclude that his slavish adherence to the law of gravity contributed very powerfully to his calamity.

Undeterred by the shocking example which had been made of one of his domestics, a second was forthwith sent up the tree to capture the reptile, if possible. By an ingenious contrivance the little fiend was snared. A bold man, armed, *retarius*-fashion, with a net of exceedingly fine meshes and a stick, scaled the tree. Arrived at the hole, he placed the net over the orifice so as to bar all exit, and, by cautious irritation with the stick, incensed him into a second attack. The net received him. Once there he was a hopeless and helpless captive, and became the absolute property of my friend, "Monsieur le Raconteur." I regret to say I have not been furnished with any more particulars of the history of this death-dealing demon, and am unable to say whether he possessed the power of destroying by a wink of his vicious eye; or whether, like the snakes of antiquity, he emulated the destroyers of Laocoon by spitting out venom in a most unsnake-like manner; or like the wondrous hydra of Lerna, who committed an equally flagrant violation of the laws of natural history.

Since writing the above, a curious anecdote of snake-bite has come to my knowledge, which, if true (and I have no reason to believe it otherwise), exhibits most forcibly the fearfully rapid action of snake-poison on certain occasions. A gentleman, walking in his garden with his dogs—a spaniel and a terrier—had his attention attracted by the latter, who, after the manner of his kind, was vehemently engaged in the pursuit of sport among some *débris* and refuse. The spaniel joined his companion, and both became so actively absorbed in their occupation, that their master was induced to give them a little aid by clearing away some matted briar-bush which impeded their investigations. Relieved of this difficulty, they soon scratched a hole, into which they alternately

dived, and again retreated as quick as lightning, until on one occasion the spaniel failed to make good his retreat. His master saw a long black form dart out and withdraw itself as rapidly, while the dog retired with a yelp. The terrier, however, nothing daunted, rushed into the hole, and a moment afterwards reappeared, *with half a cobra in his mouth*. The master, being now for the first time thoroughly aware of the dangerous nature of their antagonist, immediately hurried the dogs off to a small pond of water, at the same time sending a man to the house for ammonia. The spaniel was first examined, being dipped in the water to cleanse him of the mud with which he had begrimed himself. As he was drawn out of the water the power of the poison asserted itself, and *in ten seconds* he was dead: the moment of death being within *one minute and a quarter* of his receiving the bite. The terrier was not bitten. It is difficult to account for the extreme rapidity of the action of the poison, unless we take into consideration that the dog's blood had, by excitement and exertion, been roused into such active circulation that it became a much speedier conductor of the poison to the nerve centres than it would have been had it been in a more sluggish state. In any case it must be accepted as a most striking example of the power of snake-poison, and we could wish for no better to complete our illustrations of its fatal effects.

EPISCOPAL AMENITIES A CENTURY AGO.

THANKS to the literary zeal of Lord Lyttelton, a very curious and amusing correspondence between two bishops has recently been allowed to appear in *Notes and Queries*. At the present day, if two divines have the misfortune to disagree upon any point, whether theological or secular, the quarrel usually ends by each praying for the other in perhaps somewhat strong, but always civil, terms. The correspondence to which we refer took place in the year 1762, between Dr. Lyttelton, Bishop of Carlisle, and Dr. Osbaldeston, who had just been translated from Carlisle to London; and shows that at that period the highest dignitaries in the Church could indulge in language that society would not now tolerate amongst gentlemen.

The great subject of dispute was in relation to dilapidation expenses; but various

minor subjects, as bad and missing wine, the removal of a surplice, and other petty details are introduced, which the outer world commonly regard as altogether unworthy of episcopal consideration.

If we may believe the statements of J. Turner—who seems to have been the Bishop of Carlisle's confidential servant—the Bishop of London must have left Rose Castle in a very disreputable state:—"Several does not fit to stand, y^e flowrs just ready to brack through." The furniture seems to have been as bad as the floors:—"It is not possible for me to mention how many yousless and worthless things hear be, but hear is a ould painted oyle cloth with very great holes in it; y^e maid in the house says it never was yousd in y^e late Bishop's time, but cramd into a littel closet; it is of no value, but it is valled to y^r lordship at 12 shelings. . . . Thear was not a pot or saspan in y^e kitchen but what was as black with inside as without; and as to y^e beads (beds), I only wish y^r lordship could seein them when I did, they are all aird and cleand, but they will only be ould rags."

When it is further added that the Bishop had not had his chimneys swept for several years, and left no mops or dustpans to his successor, it is pretty clear that Dr. Lyttelton, who had paid a large sum for furniture, and thought he was entering an episcopal palace in all respects ready for his reception, had some cause for complaint.

We shall not, however, enter into details regarding the subject of dilapidations, which occupies the greater part of this correspondence, but shall confine our remarks to two minor disputes regarding the wine and the missing surplice, which greatly disturbed the equanimity of our episcopal correspondents. When, some two months later, the new Bishop arrived at Rose Castle, a new grievance awaits him, regarding which he thus writes to his predecessor:—"Mr. Denton having delivered the key of the cellar to my butler on our arrival here, containing the wine I bought of your lordship, on comparing them (*sic*) with the list you gave me, a greater quantity appears to have been charged and paid for by me than the cellar contains; and some of the wines, also, that I paid for as sound and good, prove as sour as verjuice." To this complaint the Bishop of London sends the following remarkable answer:—"I shall be very ready to allow you the money you de-

mand to be paid you by Denton. I desire the bottles and sour wine described may be returned to him, and given to friends of mine—who, I doubt not, will have a grateful remembrance of me even for vinegar."

This answer from "Your lordship's affectionate brother and humble servant, R^{IC}. LONDON," naturally excites the wrathful indignation of "Your obedt. humb. serv^t, CHA. CARLISLE," who is clearly able to hit as hard as his metropolitan brother. He begins his reply by stating that "My butler is ready to deliver the ten bottles of sour wine *for a present to your Cumberland friends*, agreeable to your lordship's express directions. As I take it for granted you would not compliment your friends with such liquor if you credit y^e account I gave you of it; consequently, by ordering it to be disposed of in this manner, your lordship undoubtedly believes and means to insinuate that I misrepresented the condition of your claret in order to throw it back upon your hands, which carries in it so mean a suspicion, as raises my contempt rather than my anger. I had cause enough to complain of your other wines, y^e port being so foul that every bottle must be filtered before it can be drunk; and this circumstance your own butler acquainted mine with, wherefore your lordship could hardly be a stranger to it; but, as I could make tolerable shift with it, I said nothing to your lordship about it; tho' should have been very glad to have return'd *that* and all y^e rest of your wines, for far less money than I paid for them."

At this point the wine controversy disappears from view, the greater part of the letter from which the above extracts are taken having reference to the subject of dilapidations, and an unfair appraisement of "y^e goods and furniture." In reply, R^{IC}. LONDON sends a brief note, stating that he will not pay the sum mentioned in the estimate, and adding in a postscript the singular information that "the table cloath and napkin inquired after some time ago was by mistake sent with other linen hither; it is now found, and shall be restored to you in London this winter."

Without thanking the Bishop of London for his consideration regarding "the table cloath and napkin," Bishop Lyttelton replies that he will not give up his just demands, and ends his letter in the following forcible terms:—"Much as I hate contention, and

endeavour agreeable to y^e apostle's direction to live peaceably with all men, your lords^p is greatly mistaken if you imagine I will tamely submit to suffer a considerable loss in my dilapidations, because it is your will and pleasure that I should do so."

We cannot conclude our notice of this interesting correspondence between these "affectionate brothers," without an allusion to a minor war which they carried on in the postscripts of their earlier letters, regarding the missing surplice. The Bishop of Carlisle on arriving at Rose Castle is disappointed that his predecessor had not left his chaplain's old surplice in the chapel. "My chaplain," he complains, "has been forced to read prayers without one ever since I came, and this in sight of half the county who have been to visit me."

This unfortunate remark about his numerous visitors exposes him to a hard hit from his unsparing antagonist, who replies—"In answer to the reproach of not leaving the surplices, I tell you I found none at Rose, nor indeed books, cushions, or other furniture proper for the chapel, which, with part of the Communion plate I left there," (and?) "was of not less expense to me than the sum of £100; and this I judge the county of Cumberland knows, and is visible to that half of it that has visited you."

The conclusion of this minor war—for what is a surplice in comparison with sour claret, foul port, and a refusal to pay dilapidation expenses?)—appears in the postscript of the Bishop of Carlisle's second letter. "What your lordship is pleas'd to call a *reproach* from me on your taking away y^e surplices, had you consider'd my words with candour and temper, would have appear'd at most a mild complaint for removing them without acquainting me with it. My chaplain has been forced to appear without one till yesterday, which was no very decent sight in a bishop's chapel."

Dr. Lyttelton was an antiquary of considerable reputation in his day, and was, doubtless, acquainted with the early history of Lantony Abbey, whose ruins may still be seen on the Black Mountain, not many miles from Abergavenny. He might have derived some consolation from the consideration that the ecclesiastics of that establishment, some six centuries previously, had experienced similar, but more grievous, troubles; for an old chronicler tells us that they suffered fearfully from the oppression of

those who ought to have supported them; and adds, by way of illustration, that they were left, not only without surplices, so that they could not duly perform divine service, but, what was far more grievous, without breeches, so that they could not attend it.

SENSATION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SIR GUY DE GUY."

IN days of yore, when men were slow,
And simple things were taught to know,
With understandings meek and low,
And lowly veneration;
How clumsy were the arts designed
By unsophisticated hind
To mystify the rural mind,
And make a great SENSATION.

Some mask, or sheet-and-turnip ghost,
Or awkward conjuror at the most,
Was all that genius then could boast,
By way of agitation.

The problem of the missing pea;
The wandering porker's A B C;
The fortune-teller's mysterie,
Comprised their stock SENSATION.

The puzzled boor would scratch his pate,
And grin, and own the trick was great;
But ne'er would he profanely prate
Of "spirit visitation."

He loved a ghost, and loved it best
When he the goblin could arrest
And then apply the cart-whip test,
And give and take SENSATION.

But conjurors now affect alliance
With spirits, and the de'il's compliance;
Raise hocus-pocus to a "science"
With vast elaboration.

And silly dames and solemn fools,
Will lend themselves the trickster's tools
And sit like gaping girls in schools
Awaiting a SENSATION.

The expert their little wit confuses;
His neat machinery he uses;
A trumpet sounds, a table cruises—
Immense their perturbation!
A colleague binds the conjuror tight,
And then extinguishes the light;
Then thumps the audience left and right,
Producing great SENSATION.

And simple dupes of either sex
Their little bit of bram perplex,
Believing spirits come to vex,
And hold confabulation.
And thus our wiser age we find
Befooled; more ignorant than the hind,
Whose healthy credence was confined
To rational SENSATION.

The arts, the drama, and the press
This ruling principle profess;
Religion too doth hardly less
In this our generation;
Until we sigh again to know
Those dear old days of long ago,
When men were simple, dull, and slow,
And lived without SENSATION.

THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK III.—CHAPTER I.

BROTHERLY CONFIDENCE.

MADINGLEY CHASE was precisely one of those old country houses which seem specially adapted for the entertainment of the friends of the hosts and hostesses. The old greyish-brown stone mansion of the Mortimers was a massive structure of the time of the Tudors; but numerous additions had been made to the original pile by successive occupants. It carried hospitality and a genial welcome on the face of it, as it stood, surrounded by smoothly shaven lawns and broad belts of gravel, merging imperceptibly into the park, studded thickly with elms and beeches of mighty growth. The house was approached through the park by a drive of nearly a mile in length; at first open, with little clumps and clusters of trees right and left, or standing singly in stately beauty close by the borders of the drive: nearer the mansion was an avenue of great length, composed of elms of very equal growth and great size. Here and there was a gap, which spoke of some giant felled by the lightning's mighty stroke or the rude winter blast—a gap it would take something above a century to fill; but such blemishes, happily, were few in the fine avenue at the Chase. Beneath the spreading branches and thick foliage of the old elms was perfect shade from the fiercest rays of the noontide summer sun; and under their shelter was the softest bit of going in the park. Legends there were of deer having cropped this rich pasture; but Sir Harold had no antlered stock. The nearest approach to these lords of the forest at Madingley were the dark Scotch cattle from across the Border, the red-skinned, white-faced Herefords, and the black-visaged sheep that now roamed at pleasure over the whole extent of the spacious park. To the south of the house lay Miss Margaret's flower-garden, in the management of which she had much pleasure. Stretching away beyond it were the large fruit and kitchen gardens, and productive orchards. And on the opposite side, partly hidden by the trees, were the stables, upon which Sir Harold was pleased to bestow as

much attention as upon anything about the place. The mansion, which was upon a scale neither too large nor too small for comfort, had none of that straggling appearance often a striking feature in houses built by different owners, of various tastes, and at succeeding periods: it was both well-ordered and compact. There was a fine entrance-hall; but the reception-rooms generally were rather low, according to our modern notions. The billiard-room and morning-room, however, the additions of Sir Harold—for every occupant added something to the structure—were free from this defect. The dining-room was long and spacious, with embayed windows opening into the garden, and commanding fine views of the grounds and park. It was preserved as much as possible in its original state. The ceiling was of oak panel, and the walls were wainscoted high up with the same durable material. The scutcheons of dead owners of the Chase shone in stained glass in the windows, and their old armour, kept brightly polished, hung above the wainscot of the room in which for generations they had sat.

In this old-fashioned dining-room Sir Harold and Robert Mortimer sat over their claret, one evening in the month of April. The air was chilly, and a bright wood fire threw out a genial warmth from the wide fireplace. As the flames flickering rose and fell, their light fell on the figures of the two half-brothers. Sir Harold looked much older of late. Robert pale and careworn. He was now one of the General Officers of the Pink Tape Office, and spoken of at last as a man likely to rise to a respectable height in the world of politics. But he must not lose time, as he was no longer a young man with the best years of life before him.

Sir Harold was the first to commence a conversation.

"Well, Robert," he said, "it is some time since we met."

"Yes," said the member for Malton, who had come down partly with the intention of favouring his constituents with an address, "it is a long time—for us, that is."

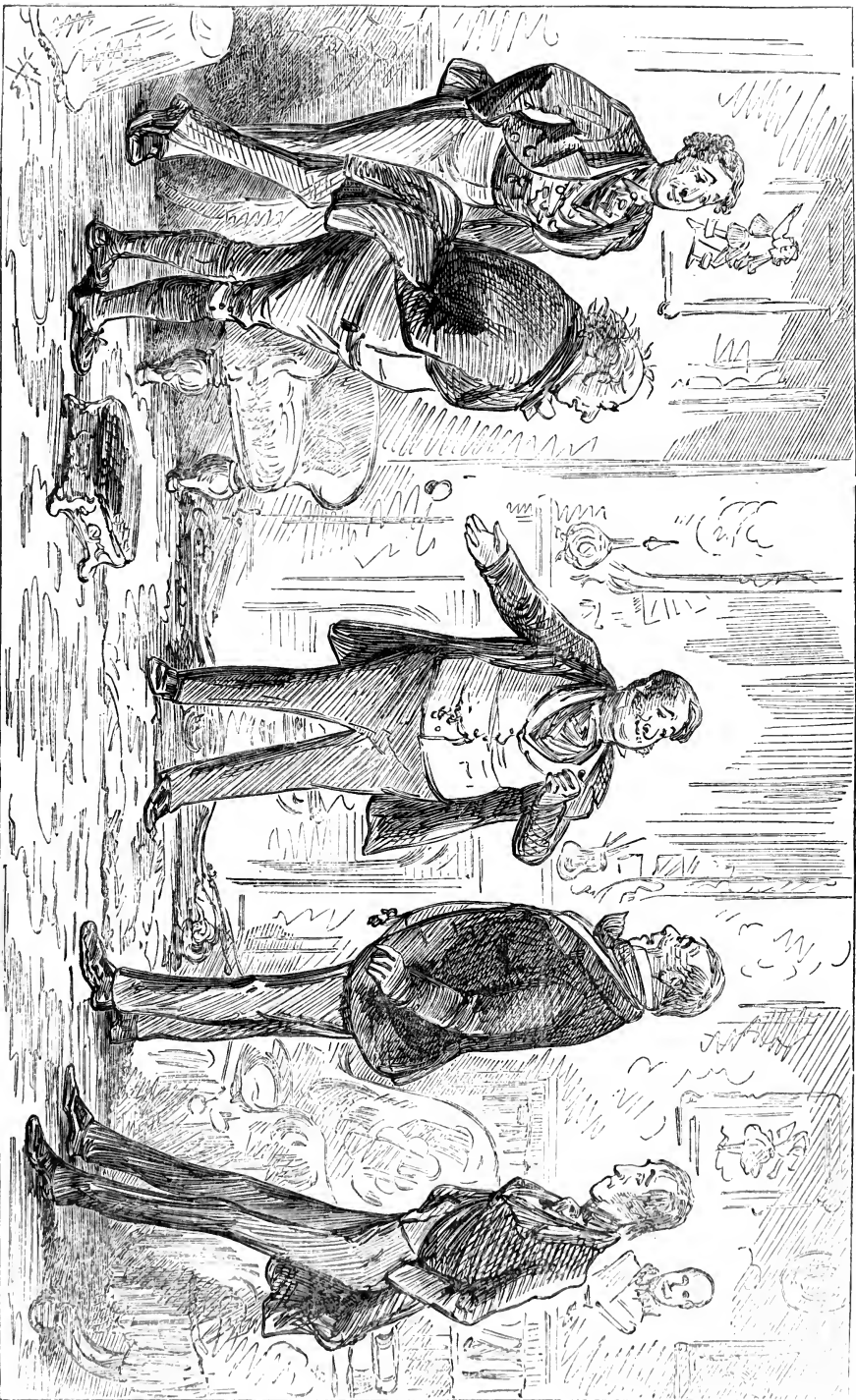
"Why, we have hardly met since Christmas, Robert."

"Have we not? No; when I come to think of it, we have not."

"You will stay for a few days now?"

"I am afraid not long enough to do me much good."

"Oh, don't hurry away now you are with



Once a Week.]

"AND WHERE, I ASK, DO OUR CAPITALISTS LIVE?"—Page 238. (Phil.)

[April 16, 1870.

us, your native air will set you on your legs sooner than anything in the world."

Robert often complained of being overworked.

"The recess will be over in less than a week now," he said, "and I must be back in town when Parliament sits again."

"Are you going to speechify at Malton this Easter?" asked Sir Harold. "Extra-parliamentary utterances, as the papers call them, are all the rage."

"Yes, and very little good they do," Robert replied, with a smile. "However, now I am here, I may take the opportunity of holding palaver with my constituents."

"By the bye," said Sir Harold, "Margaret says your wife thinks she could drive that pair of roan cobs, and you might as well have them in town, for the season at all events, if she would like them. Margaret hardly ever drives them herself."

"Oh, you are very good," said Robert; "but I think I have got as many horses now as I can afford to keep."

"Well, well," Sir Harold answered, "do just as you like; only I thought it might induce your wife to take more exercise. You are neither of you looking very well."

"I think Florence is about as usual, but my health has not been good all the winter. I think a thorough change would do me good, but at present it is out of my power to go away."

"Don't overtask yourself," said Sir Harold; "try to take things as easily as you can."

There was a pause, in which the Baronet shaded his eyes from the light. He proceeded.

"You must take care of yourself, and be ready to settle down here if anything should happen to me."

"Oh, Harold, don't talk of it," cried Robert, quite warmly for him. "You have the soundest constitution in the family."

"Yes, I am pretty strong," Sir Harold replied; "but you must remember I am getting an old man very fast. My sight, too, is a great trouble to me. I can't see to shoot, and I am almost afraid to drive about for fear of accidents. My eyes have been much worse of late."

"Have you seen your doctor lately about them?" asked his brother.

"Yes; and he tells me they will get worse for some time, which is not very cheerful news."

"I am sorry to hear that," said Robert.

"They talk of some operation after a bit."

"I hope you will get relief without."

"Robert," said Sir Harold, with the faintest trace of emotion in his voice, "I believe I shall become blind altogether; though they don't tell me so, of course."

Robert Mortimer tried to remove this painful impression from his brother's mind; but he was not very successful in shaking the Baronet's conviction.

"By the bye," he said, presently, "I had a letter about Charles this morning. He has got his commission all right."

"I am glad of that," said Sir Harold; "one of the name ought to be quite at home in my old regiment."

"They are in London now, but I believe they are likely shortly to be moved to Scotland."

"Well, very likely that will be better for Charles for a time than living in London."

"Yes," said Robert.

"I confess, he is not at all what I should wish to see him," Sir Harold continued. "I suppose I was never told the exact reason of his leaving the university in such a hurry."

"Oh, dear, yes, Harold; you know how ill he was."

"He got better very soon, though, brother."

"His mother was very much alarmed, and took him down to his grandfather's place for a change of air."

"There is one thing—he left no unpaid debts of honour, I think."

Charles had of late lost ground in his uncle's good graces, and his father did all he could to excuse his shortcomings, and propitiate the head of the family.

"Ah, you are like his aunt Margaret, ready to make excuses for everything he does," said the Baronet, in reply. "But I cannot shut my eyes to the truth, Robert; and neither he nor Malton please me in the way they are going on."

"Malton is very wild, I know," said Robert, in a soothing tone, and hoping his own son might have the benefit of the contrast thrown into the scale. "But that is nothing new; he always has been a scape-grace."

"He is getting through his own property very fast, I know."

"He is perfectly reckless, I fear," groaned Robert, in pretended sympathy. "I always hear somebody talking of his extravagance."

"I know. However, he is quiet as long as he is here."

"How long have you had him with you at the Chase?"

"About a week now. I expect he will find it 'slow,' as he calls it, and leave us soon."

"How does he amuse himself?"

"Margaret says he is flirting with Mabel."

"Then the sooner he goes the better," said Robert Mortimer to himself.

"How strangely things come about!"

"How?"

"Why, Fairholme's son dying, and his cousin directly after."

"Malton is next heir, I suppose, to the dukedom; and I hear Fairholme cannot last very long. They say he is very shaky."

"I have not seen him for a long time."

"What is it worth?"

"Not very much for the title; say twenty thousand a-year when all is made clear."

"I wish—" Robert began, then stopped abruptly. He was going to say, he wished he was about to step into twenty thousand a-year. He was thinking aloud, in fact; and might have shocked his brother's feelings if, after their previous conversation, he had completed his sentence in an audible tone.

As they left the dining-room, he made up his mind to take Malton away from Maddingley, even if he stayed a day or two longer on purpose to secure his object.

CHAPTER II.

GROBEY AT HOME.

AT Mrs. Grafton's house in Upper Gore-street, on a fine evening towards the middle of April, two gentlemen arrived together, and at once proceeded to knock loudly at the door. One of these gentlemen was stout and rather short, the other was tall and very thin. Both were evidently dressed for the evening. In answer to their noisy summons, the door flew open without a moment's delay, and the servant-maid showed them at once up to the drawing-room floor.

"H'm," remarked the stout gentleman, wiping his forehead with a yellow bandanna, "We're here first, Odger—we're here first."

"Never mind," replied Mr. Peter Odger, with philosophic calmness, "I always like to be early enough—at a dinner."

"Ha, ha! yes," said our friend the Dominie, "I know you do. So do I—hate to keep things waiting and getting cold. Wonder where Grobey is."

"I'm sure I don't know," said Mr. Odger, with a melancholy look. "I fervently hope nothing has occurred to keep him late at that theatre this afternoon."

"He'll be here directly, you may be sure," observed Mr. Strongi'th'arm, hopefully.

"Wonder who is coming," he added.

"We couldn't begin without him, even if the others were come," said Mr. Peter.

"No."

"I'm desperately faint—I like my dinner at half-past one or two better than at six."

"We always dine at two at the Academy."

"So do we at the Establishment."

"I have behaved myself like a fool to-day," said Mr. Odger, reproaching himself.

"Why—what now?" demanded Mr. Strongi'th'arm. "Not gone and paid that rate I told you they never ought to have levied at all?"

"No," replied his friend; "refused to touch the mutton at dinner for fear of spoiling my appetite, and haven't tasted bit or drop since breakfast, I assure you."

"Dear me!" said the Dominie. "Now, I had a good lunch."

"One—two—three—four—and two—Six," remarked Mr. Odger, thoughtfully counting the number of places laid at the table, and breaking off a crumb or two of bread, and putting them in his mouth with an indescribably hungry manner.

"Six?"

"Johnson, you know, coming from his hotel."

"His brother—on his birthday always."

"Ourselves, four."

"Grobey, five."

"Only one more."

"Somebody from the theatre, perhaps."

"I dare say he's in all the while," said the Dominie, suddenly. "Let's ask," and he pulled the bell.

The scene of this conversation was the lodgings of Mr. Robert Grobey, described on the playbills as the celebrated tragedian. The room in which it took place occupied about two-thirds of the first floor of Mrs. Grafton's house, the remaining third being taken up by the actor's bedchamber and the landing. It was a long room, with three windows in it, looking out into Upper Gore-street. The walls exhibited quite a gallery of portraits of the leading ornaments of the British stage, from Thomas Betterton to the likeness of the distinguished occupant in several of his favourite characters.

Where the paper showed, it was green, with drab flowers of a chaste design. The curtains and carpet were also green and drab, in keeping with the paper.

In spite of Mrs. Grafton's care, the room wore a somewhat untidy aspect: books—chiefly Lacy's acting editions—were littered about, and there was also a liberal profusion of pipes and cigar-holders, including everything, from the stately hubble-bubble to the discarded clay. Three bookcases held such portions of the tragedian's library as were not scattered about the floor. From two of these, Shakspeare and Milton smiled upon Grobey's efforts. On the third stood a statuette of the Three Graces in white plaster.

"I hear somebody moving in the next room," Mr. Odger remarked, as the Dominie had his hand upon the bell.

At the same moment Mr. Robert Grobey entered the room, and two Hansom cabs, driving up to the door from opposite directions, put down two other visitors.

"Mr. Nathaniel Johnson," said Grobey, making a necessary introduction, "my brother, Mr. Horatio Grobey, of the—a—Stock Exchange."

Mr. Horatio Grobey bowed in the most polite manner to Mr. Nathaniel Johnson.

Although the Dominie and Mr. Peter Odger appeared attired in their best, they were completely eclipsed by the splendid array of the other three gentlemen. The actor wore a coat and waistcoat of brownish hue, with small gold specks all over them, and a gorgeous blue satin scarf. Mr. Horatio Grobey, the worthy representative of the Stock Exchange, a somewhat corpulent and oily man, honoured the occasion with a very light waistcoat, a satin scarf of a style similar to his brother's, and a pair of resplendent varnished boots.

Mr. Nathaniel Johnson, a country friend of Mr. Peter Odger's, entertained during his stay in town—at his own proper cost—at a quiet hotel near the Strand, made the fifth gentleman present. He wore very tight trousers of a kind of drab corded material, and a brown velvet coat; round his neck was twisted an ample silk neckerchief, in which the Tory colours of his native county were happily blended in alternate stripes, both appearing in checks in the border. A description of Mr. Johnson would necessarily be incomplete without some mention of the huge family watch-seal that dangled from his fob.

"Oh, here you are," said the Dominie, advancing to meet the actor and the stock-broker as they entered the room. "How d'e do. How do."

"How do you do?" Mr. Peter inquired, in a melancholy manner, as if expecting some painful reply.

Having been assured that all three gentlemen were in their usual health, Mr. Odger propped himself against the table, and sat listening to the conversation going on around him. He seldom took a more active part; only now and then throwing in a remark, delivered in a deeply lugubrious tone.

"Well, and how are things looking in the country, Mr. Johnson?" asked the gentleman of the Stock Exchange of the representative of the agricultural interest. "How are crops looking?"

This was said with the air of a man who knows much better than the individual of whom he asks the information. However, Mr. Horatio Grobey's manner was thrown away upon Mr. Johnson, who was rather obtuse.

"We are going on about the same as usual, sir," he replied, in a very contented way.

As Sir Harold's steward, and as the occupant of a good farm besides, Mr. Johnson was in tolerably prosperous circumstances, and somewhat disposed to stand upon his dignity.

"We live in hard times, Johnson," Mr. Strongi'th'arm remarked.

"We do, indeed," responded Mr. Peter Odger feelingly, as one who pronounces a fervent "Amen."

"I get on very well in 'em," observed Johnson, chuckling, and tapping his pockets.

"Ah, you're a rich man, you know," said the Dominie, rallying the farmer.

"You are rich," said Mr. Odger, in deep tones, and with clerk-like intonation.

"I don't think there's much the matter—at present," continued Mr. Johnson, as in a way qualifying his remark.

"What!" cried the Dominie in amazement, "nothing the matter?"

"Nothing the matter?" repeated Odger.

"Everything is the matter," Mr. Strongi'th'arm proceeded, growing warm.

"Everything," was his friend's guttural response.

"Why, what is there to complain of, Strongi'th'arm?"

"Rates and taxes."

"Income tax," Mr. Odger threw in, as the impost he disliked most.

"The general condition of the country is eminently prosperous," observed Mr. Horatio, with a magnificent roll in his voice, and with a wave of his hand, as if to say, "Who shall contradict the assertion?"

"I am happy to hear it," said their host; who, from his absorption in dramatic pursuits, took no interest in politics.

"Yes," said the stockbroker, grandly; "money is plentiful. Shares in every practicable scheme are instantly taken up. I repeat that in my humble opinion the state of the country is satisfactory—to the Stock Exchange; and where, I should like to inquire, can the pulse of the country be felt, if not on the Stock Exchange?"

"Where, indeed?" the Dominic assented.

"I'm not a conscience-money fool," said Mr. Odger, addressing himself, and evidently still thinking of the injury done him by the Income Tax Commissioners.

Grobey the tragedian stood in an effective attitude, with his right hand in his pocket, and his left on the back of the arm-chair against which he leaned. Grobey, of the Stock Exchange, stood with his broad back to the fireplace, with one hand stuck in his waistcoat, and made use of the other as an instrument—soft, white, and plump—for impressing grand financial and economic truths upon his audience.

"There never was a time, within my extensive experience of the various phases of Finance, more favourable for the Investment of Capital. This is eminently the country of the capitalist."

"Ah, country of the capitalist!" said Mr. Johnson, becoming interested. He had a few thousands of his own.

"Country of the capitalist!" Mr. Odger repeated to himself, sarcastically. "Country to be taxed and bled to death in!"

"And where, I ask, do our capitalists live?" continued the speculator.

"Where?" said the Dominic.

"Where in this country do our capitalists spend the best years of their invaluable lives—invaluable lives in that country so eminently adapted for capitalists?"

"Eminently adapted for parish relief and luxury—for paupers and vagabonds!" grumbled Mr. Odger to himself.

"Well, in the country, I suppose," said Mr. Johnson, boldly. "Sir Harold does, and always did."

"Mr. Johnson," said Mr. Horatio Grobey, in his blandest manner, "it is of the Commercial, not the Agricultural, interest I speak at present."

"Well?"

"They live, sir, in this eminently extensive and highly populated metropolis. They breathe, sir, an atmosphere eminently—"

"Poisoned with—" interrupted Mr. Peter Odger.

"Precisely—as my astute friend remarks—poisoned with—with vaporous exhalations of an eminently noxious and detrimental character."

"Too true," murmured Mr. Odger, fervently.

"Well, sir," demanded the representative of the agricultural interest, "and pray can't they go into the fresh air away from—"

"The pestilential exhalations of an overpopulated capital? No, sir; that is exactly and pre-eminently what they can-not do."

"Now, dear me!" the steward ejaculated.

"But what do astute capitalists propose to do for their fellows? They propose—" here he fumbled in the breast-pocket of his coat, as if searching for a prospectus—"they propose, if the capitalists of this great country cannot go to the fresh and unpolluted streams of mighty o— Winds, to bring fresh air to them."

"Goodness!—how?" exclaimed the country gentleman.

"I am about to launch a scheme in the hands of a Limited Liability Company, for bringing fresh air to London from Deptford in huge enamelled iron pipes."

"Now, really."

"Enormous fans, applied on a novel principle of pneumatic science, will force—will force Millions of gallons of the freshest and purest atmospheric air through the pipes, which will be laid on as water is in every street, and in a few months every district in this vast metropolis will pay to the 'Pneumatic Tubes Fresh Air Company' an air rate levied on the rental, and paid just as the water rate now is."

Mr. Strong's arm burst into a loud laugh.

"If it succeeds no better than your scheme for insuring the lives of racehorses," he said—

"Or," Odger broke out, impatiently, "no better than your assurance against the liability attaching to large families—"

"Gentlemen, if you *had* but sold out of those companies at the time I suggested—"

"Never had a chance," said Mr. Peter Odger, dolefully. "I couldn't give my Large Family shares away."

"I was no end out of pocket too," said the Dominic.

"Seventy-five pounds, thirteen and eight-pence, Strongi'th'arm," his friend remarked, supplying him with information of the precise sum swallowed up by his unfortunate embarkation in that adventurous scheme.

Dinner was now served, and Mr. Horatio Grobey took the seat to the right of his brother, and next to Mr. Nathaniel Johnson, upon whom the speculator's eloquence had made some impression.

"What's this about? Who's this for?" inquired the Dominic, as he took his own seat, pointing to a vacant place.

"I expect an old pupil of yours to join us, Mr. Strongi'th'arm," replied the host.

"Oh! Erle, is he here?"

"Yes; Mrs. G— has located him in the parlours for a time."

"Oh, indeed. I did not know but what he was off with the Doctor and Madam to France."

"No; he is here in London."

"I am sincerely sorry for my dear old friend, Doctor Gasc," said Robert Grobey.

"Ah! so am I," the Dominic rejoined, "and so is Mrs. Strongi'th'arm. Nobody will ever treat us as he did. He was the cleverest doctor I ever spoke to about this," he continued, tapping his deaf ear; "he seemed to understand it. Never charged me one farthing in his life."

Mr. Strongi'th'arm now looked across the table at his friend, Mr. Odger, who was dolefully contemplating the company generally.

"Poor Gasc we are talking about, Odger."

"Oh," groaned the gentleman addressed, "lost his money; irreparable—irreparable, I fear."

"Ah!" cried the Dominic, jumping up suddenly, and shaking hands warmly with the young man, "Erle, how do? How d'e do? We were just talking about you. I thought, perhaps, you were off with Dr. Gasc to Paris."

"No," returned Erle, "I am staying in London, and putting up at Mrs. Grafton's, as you see."

Erle, who had known Grobey from childhood, had readily consented to make one of the guests at his little dinner, and now was formally presented by the actor to Mr.

Horatio Grobey, of the Stock Exchange, and to Mr. Nathaniel Johnson. The latter gentleman he had heard of as a country friend of Mr. Odger's, and as the proprietor of an establishment at which Mr. Peter was in the habit of making a stay of some weeks in the summer. With the Dominic and Mr. Odger, of course, Erle was on easy terms of acquaintanceship, so no introduction was necessary; and, slipping quietly into his seat, there was no longer any occasion for delay, and Grobey proceeded at once to help the *potage*. Dinner went off with considerable *éclat*, and without a hitch of any moment occurring. Mrs. Grafton's cooking was pronounced to be admirable by all the parties most intimately concerned, and altogether the birthday banquet of the tragedian was a success.

Mr. Horatio Grobey had taken occasion, during the progress of the meal, to introduce various financial, commercial, and speculative topics for discussion. And he had aired several admirable schemes for making a large sum of money at a nominal outlay, and, as he observed, with "No Risk."

His remarks were very obviously addressed to his neighbour, the country gentleman; who, in reply to the speculator's remark—"I have, sir, been considered—generally—an astute man, and eminently well calculated to participate in those magnificent *coups* which are a credit to our Stock Exchange and to the Capitalists of this great country," said he thought Mr. Horatio Grobey was a man of great ability; and if ever, in the disposal or management of the few hundreds that he might happen to possess, he had occasion to consult, &c., then Mr. Horatio Grobey, of the Stock Exchange—which, after all, is *rather* a vague and unsatisfactory address—had his, Mr. N. Johnson's, trust and confidence.

The health of their host was drunk by the guests, and everybody present wished him an indefinite number of happy returns of the day, and expressed a hope that he would long be a bright ornament of a noble profession.

So a very pleasant evening was passed.

Reginald Erle accompanied the Dominic as far as the gates of the Academy, principally on Mr. Odger's account, who said he had been bilious and dyspeptic for several days, and felt much worse on that night. As they passed the old red brick house, in Bartholomew-square, where Reginald had

passed so many years—a new tenant occupied it now—Mr. Strongi'th'arm said—

"I see they have let the Doctor's house."

"Yes," said Erle, sadly.

"Dr. Gasc is gone to Paris?"

"To try to save something from the wreck of his fortune."

"And what are you going to do now you have determined on giving up the notion of being educated for a physician?"

"Really, my dear Dominie," said Erle, "I can hardly tell you. Yesterday I was a medical student, to-morrow I may be a budding lawyer: to-day I am between the two."

TABLE TALK.

IT IS NOT ALWAYS that we can give our assent to the doings of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, when it steps aside from the useful path it commonly treads. But in the action taken by the society in the matter of the Agricultural Hall sham bull fights we cordially concur. So long as nothing more painful than a plentiful supply of red rag and brass band was employed to remind the poor bull-calves of their native ferocity, there could, we think, be little objection to foolish people paying their half-crowns to witness the freaks of the animals, hear the music (?) of the band, and see the great agility of the banderilleros in leaping over the barriers of the arena—out of the way of the nothing at all. But when it became necessary, in order to fill the seats, to make the fight more real, and to that end the poor calves—for they were hardly grown bulls—were prodded and goaded with sharp spikes, until in their pain they made savage rushes at their tormentors, the officers of the society did well in taking out summonses against the Spanish performers. And the magistrate who tried the case did well in expounding to them the English law affecting the treatment of dumb creatures, and fining them a sovereign a-piece. *Ignorantia juris non excusat*: but, in the interests of humanity, no stronger punishment was demanded for the first offence. Now, the Compania de Toreros and Banderilleros know the law, and probably will take themselves and their bulls back to Andalusia, instead of starring the provinces as they had intended.

BUT APROPOS OF our own bull fights, which, in the native fashion of bull-baiting,

with the dogs proper for such sport, have long been prohibited in England, we may mention another and very curious sport with bulls—namely, bull races. The town of Northampton is still noted for its horse races—which, as we pen these lines, are being run off; and it was at Northampton in the year 1724, that the bull races—some particulars of which we append—took place. In an early volume of that old and highly respectable journal, the *Northampton Mercury*, there occurs the following notice to the good people of the town and vicinage:—

"On Tuesday in Whitsun week, being the 26th of May, 1724, will be run for, from the gate of William Thursby, Esq., leading into Wellingsborough-road, down Abington-street, to the Pump on Cornmarket Hill, in Northampton, a plate of £5 value, by any bull, cow, or bullock, of any age or size whatsoever, that never won the value of £5 in money or plate."

From this last stipulation, or condition of entry, it is clear that such races were not uncommon. The advertisement then proceeds:—

"Each rider to have boots and spurs, with a goad of the usual size. Every bull, etc., to pay one shilling entrance, which is to be given to the second best bull, etc."

The riders or jockeys must have had a rough time of it on their unwieldy steeds; but they, at least, had no Society's officers to fear if they used their spurs and goads. It was also a "selling race," for says the notice—

"The winning beast to be sold for £20 (if desired) by the subscribers. They are to start at the gate above-mentioned at five o'clock in the afternoon. If any disputes arise, to be decided by the majority of the subscribers then present."

The sight must have been very curious and very amusing, as the bulls came careering through the open fields between the little village of Abington and the town of Northampton. Damage, however, was done to the crops—probably the bulls could not be kept in the proper course; and we find afterwards a second advertisement to the effect that—

"Complaints having been made that great Damage will be done to the Corn by the Bulls, etc., starting at the Gate of William Thursby, Esq., it is ordered . . . that the Bulls, etc., are to start from the Bridge near Smallbrook Spring, run down Abington-street, into Northampton, and end at the Pump on the Cornmarket-hill."

To which notice, in the interest of good sport, is appended the condition—

"No less than Four to start for the Plate."

These races appear to have been usually run at holiday times, and doubtless a great concourse of holiday-makers assembled to witness them. Abington Abbey is now a private lunatic asylum, and the lands of the Thursbys have passed into the possession of Lord Overstone. Abington enjoys a celebrity quite apart from the bull races that started from good Squire Thursby's gate in 1724. The old grey stone Abbey was the residence of Shakspeare's granddaughter, and the last of the Swan of Avon's line, who was married to Sir John Bernard, knight, lord of the manor of Abington. And in 1778 the hand of David Garrick planted a mulberry-tree on the lawn, "at the request of Ann Thursby," as a growing testimony of their friendship. An interesting account of Madam Elizabeth Bernard's connection with Abington appeared in a former volume of "ONCE A WEEK."

IN "THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD," Mr. Charles Dickens has introduced a number of characteristically Dickens-like names already. Drood is not a common or a pretty name. Jasper, the name of Edwin's uncle, is uncommon too; and, among others of the cathedral people, we have Tope, the verger; and the Rev. Septimus Crisparkle, the minor canon. The dean we only know yet as Mr. Dean. At Cloisterham—what a happy name for a quiet, dull old cathedral town!—Mr. Sapsea is the auctioneer, Miss Twinkleton keeps the school at the Nuns' House, and Mr. Durdles is the local statuary.

BUT IT IS DIFFICULT, if not impossible, for novelists to avoid using for some one of their characters a name that has previously been employed by another writer. Mr. Dickens has introduced us to a charming personage—"Miss Rosa Bud, of course called Rosebud." To many this name will recall the Miss Dorothy Budd of Douglas Jerrold's comedy, "St. Cupid; or, Dorothy's Fortune," produced before the Queen at Windsor, Jan. 21, 1853, and afterwards acted at the Princess's; where some of our readers may have a pleasant memory of Wright, as Queen Bee, addressing Mrs. Charles Kean, as Dorothy Budd, with "Yes, my rose-upon-the-bush." By the way, some wicked wag once removed the letter C from the title of the comedy, and thus made its name to appear as "Stupid."

MR. DICKENS'S SECOND CHAPTER begins with the following remark about the habits of the rook:—"Whosoever has observed that sedate and clerical bird, the rook, may perhaps have noticed that when he wings his way homewards towards nightfall, in a sedate and clerical company, two rooks will suddenly detach themselves from the rest, will retrace their flight for some distance, and will there poise and linger, conveying to mere men the fancy that it is of some occult importance to the body politic that this artful couple should pretend to have renounced connection with it." The habits of this sagacious bird have been observed with interest by many distinguished authors. Goldsmith described in happy terms the doings of the rooks he could see from his window in the Temple. Although there is now no rookery in those gardens, some of our readers may learn with pleasure that a goodly colony of rooks are now building their nests in the tall trees in another Inn of Court. In the very centre of London, in Gray's Inn-gardens, surrounded by the chimney-tops of countless houses, the old rooks have already built some ten or a dozen nests, in which to rear their young. From such a spot these birds must fly a considerable distance in search of the grubs and worms that form their chief food; though, perhaps, they do not wing their flight farther from necessity than their country brethren do from choice, the feeding-grounds of the latter being often a long way from their rookery.

THE PAGES OF AN OLD MAGAZINE, or yellow faded news-sheet, give us an insight, real and, as it were, living, into the everyday doings of our grandfathers and grandmothers, which is not, I think, so easily gained from any other source. The news of their day, and their wise speculations thereupon, are now matter of history to us. Their fashions in dress, new and old again some half-dozen times since. Their follies and amusements, long gone out of date. Their haunts of pleasure, of virtue, or of vice, known no more to modern eyes; the very sites thereof erased from latter-day maps. Truly of these, Ichabod! What changes even the lapse of half a century more or less brings about! What should we think now of our ladies in low dresses of a morning, with waists scarcely below their armpits, and skirts barely reaching to their

ankles? Though to short and scanty petticoats we are not at present unused. What sympathy have we with the lamentation of the "Genius of Vauxhall Gardens," poured in the ears of her "Friends and the Public," bemoaning a wet summer—

"And should another season prove like this,
Your Genius sinks—perhaps to rise no more."

Now the gardens are gone, does the poor genius linger regretful round the altered scenes where formerly she revelled—

"Midst blue flames and artificial thunders,"
and watched

"The flaming fireworks, or the tow'ring smoke"?

How strange, too, among the items of fashionable intelligence, read the bulletins from Windsor concerning the health of the poor mad Father, and the extravagant doings of the splendid Son, in his grand Pavilion at Brighthelmstone. As, for instance—

"Windsor Castle, June 1.

"His Majesty has enjoyed good bodily health, and has been uniformly tranquil throughout the last month; but his Majesty's disorder is not diminished."

Followed by a description of the new Palace of George the Magnificent—that beau-ideal of royal luxury and taste—with its halls and porticoes, marble and paint, and great "Mandarin figures" guarding the entrance to "the most superb apartments that art and fancy can produce." How different the company now looked down upon from the gorgeously vulgar ceilings by the "Royal five-clawed dragon," and "Fum, the Chinese bird of royalty." If the black-eyed Josses, sitting in their pagodas, think at all, how they must laugh in their wide sleeves at the commonplace crowd that stares at them now. From the literature our ancestors perused, and the tales they delighted in, how great is the alteration. Who, nowadays, would sit down to their "Fortitude and Frailty," "Caroline, or the Blessings of Adversity," "Dependence and Independence," and a host of other stories—all in four volumes, boards; or feel a glow of rapture at the perusal of "Lines to the Daffodil," "Dialogue between a Young Lady and her Aunt," or an "Enigmatical List of the Young Ladies at Holland House?" How completely old tastes are changed—old fashions gone! Here, however, is a link that may serve to connect our times with theirs. The toothache is with us yet. But few of us would

care, however, to try the efficacy of the remedy gravely given to the world in the erst fashionable magazine, a glance at whose pages has suggested these rambling thoughts on the mutability of human things. It is as follows:—

"A sheet of writing paper burned in a clean white plate will produce a yellowish oil, which oil is to be soaked up by a small piece of clean cotton, and placed in or on the tooth affected for twelve or fifteen minutes. 'In the most distressing cases,' says a correspondent, 'I have known it give immediate relief. One of which happened last week to Mrs. F—, who for more than three months had been almost always tormented with the pain, when, by applying the oil of paper, she had immediate relief. I never knew a case where a repetition was necessary.'"

I should think not. Mrs. F—'s faith must have been as extraordinary as the duration of her toothache. This remedy for one distressing malady is followed by a recipe for the cure of another—"To cure Fits." Garlic is the specific recommended. And, in the fashionable magazine of that period, in every monthly number, the recipes are followed by "Poetry" of the kind mentioned above, verses by the "Fashions," and the changes in costume by a "Chronicle of High Life" and an Obituary. Such was the nature of the contents of any given monthly part of the most popular magazine of the day—a periodical that held its own for above fifty years. *Mais nous avons changé tout cela.*

MR. E. J. POYNTER will be represented in the forthcoming Academy Exhibition by a nude figure of Andromeda chained to the rock; and perhaps by his designs for the Westminster mosaics. But his picture of the Egyptian girl feeding the sacred Ibis in the Halls of Karnac will not be ready for the Exhibition. We may state that the original design for this picture appeared as a full-page woodcut in "ONCE A WEEK," March 1, 1867.

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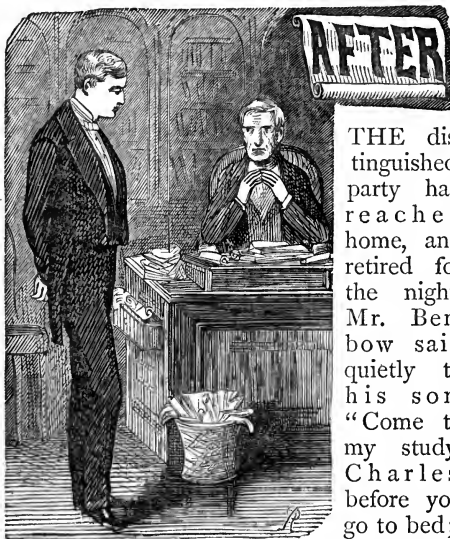
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CHAPTER IV.



THE distinguished party had reached home, and retired for the night, Mr. Benbow said quietly to his son, "Come to my study, Charles, before you go to bed;" and then

went himself to hold communion with his papers, as was his wont.

Those were strange, troubled vigils of his: like some necromancer, he called up spirits, and peopled the air about him with spectres bearing coronets, and heard mysterious cries of "Lord!" and "Viscount!" "Premier!" "M.P.!" and "Minister!" It was like the dark cellars below the great electric telegraph stations, where are the great troughs and batteries, and from whence the fluid leaps away to all the ends of the earth.

The young man, a little uneasy at this appointment, kept his young men friends up as long as he could—where he received that most unwelcome "chaffing" on his visit

behind the scenes—then went and knocked at his father's door.

That worn, restless face looked up from a vast embankment of papers, and from overflowing drawers.

"Come in, Charles," he said; "take a chair. Have you shut the outside door?"

The son, confused, did so. He knew that this was a fatal symptom of something serious. When he had returned to his place, the father sat back in his chair, and, putting his fingers together so as to make his arms and hands seem like a pair of compasses, began quietly:

"Are you a fool?"

The son hung down his head.

"Do you hear me? Are you a fool, or are you sensible, and resolved to take your own course?"

He paused.

"I must have an answer to these two questions, and a plain one. If you feel that you are so imbecile as to be unequal to taking your part in a scheme which I am to arrange for your good, say so distinctly, and save me much weary trouble. I ask again, do you feel yourself a fool?"

"No, no, father; I hope not."

"Then give a sensible explanation of your behaviour to-night. Take your time."

"I assure you, my dear father—"

His father's eyes were fixed on him, with a patient and hard air. He was really waiting an explanation.

"It was only—that is—I just went behind the scenes—as any young man would do."

"You *are* a fool," said his father, with strong emphasis.

"I begin to think so."

"Then you must not attempt to do anything for yourself. Do you know that you have nearly destroyed my whole plans for you? Do you know the cost, the labour, the anxiety of years—yes, sir, of years—that I have been at, to bring matters to this stage? and you go on like a child with a

drum and a cart. Now, I have sent for you to give you a plain warning. These are *my* plans, not yours. If you oppose them in any way, I shall do with you as I have done with everyone—in or outside of my family—who has dared not to co-operate with me. I have turned them out, cast them aside, and got others. And I'll do it to you. I can get a substitute for you any day. You know that I do what I say, and have done what I said. Look at this bundle of letters I came on to-night—wife begging mercy, daughter begging—he himself: all no use. Go, now; that's all. Do your best to-morrow to repair your bungling of to-night. You may go now."

The youth withdrew, much relieved. But, when he got to his room, the walls seemed to open and float away to each side, disclosing the scene of Paradise—the soft clouds which encompassed that one divine figure—the sweet smile—the bright and glorious face, whose glance lit up his very soul. Her enchanting tones still rang in his ears like music. Her passionate gestures, her loving manner, her devotion—when she rushed to the arms of the gardener's son. But that he could not bear to think of. To be profaned by the touch of Hulkes! Oh, that he could have been the Claude—what fire, what passion he would throw into it! Let his father talk of striving for peerages and political position for which he was struggling—those miserable dry husks—what were they to that prize? As he pursued this dream, watching that vision, listening to that divine music, his father's stiff figure and cold face passed away; and he gave himself up to a delicious rapture, and feasted again and again on those Paradisaical visions.

His father, after some measured walking round the room, came back to his interrupted work. "How dare he?" he said to himself, as he sat down. "The idiot, the booby—going after his low music-hall fancies. Why, I don't know that he has not ruined everything as it is. No; but I cannot have mistaken him. His tutors, all—I see it myself—they agreed that he was a steady, plodding lad. He *must* be," added the father, aloud and with a sort of agony; "it wants little more to the end. I paved the whole road for him: he has but to walk straight forward, and lean on me. Oh, he *must*!"

He turned to his papers again.

"How curious my coming on these to-night." And he struck the small bundle with the open palm of his hand.

"Ah, you, Mr. William Gordon, tried the same game with me fifteen years ago; and I crushed you, just as I might stand with my whole weight on some beetle. Yes," he added, turning over one letter, "this was his wife's appeal—a despairing one, I recollect."

He then read it, half aloud—"For God's sake, Mr. Benbow, have pity on us, and let not his ruin be on your soul. After all, he opposed you honourably, and from principle. He thought it was a duty, as I know; and so may I be reckoned with at the last day if I am not speaking the truth. It was not you, but your principles, dear sir, that he thought of. Surely, sir, you know that men of the first rank, in all the bitterness of politics, have never brought this animosity into their private dealings. Oh, as you will be judged hereafter, forget—forgive! Think of him—think of me—of our poor, beautiful, tender girl! Don't hunt us down."

He paused, then said—"Well, if he had his principles, I should be allowed to have mine. Mine are those of justice and no mercy. Every creature driven to the wall, as it is called—the wretch who is to be hanged to-morrow—is penitent enough: '*they will never do it again.*' Of course not. But they would. And this is your letter, Mr. Gordon: 'You are too noble, and too generous, and have been too successful in your career, to think of revenging yourself on one so humble as I am. We have been enemies, and I have done my best—I own it—in every way to hinder your designs from succeeding. You will respect me the more for owning it. Further, you will respect me still more when I tell you that I would have died rather than submit to the humiliation of asking you for anything; but I am not stoical enough to see my poor wife and girl suffer. The money, I vow and swear, shall be replaced within a year. Give me but time, and I shall dispose of my living. This is not much to ask. You know, by the statement sent to you, that I was morally innocent; that it was done for the ultimate good of him for whom I was trustee. Come, I do not believe what they tell me about you. I know that I worsted you in honourable contest—defeated, repulsed you. Now you have an opportunity of being victorious

over *me*, and of using your victory generously. For the sake of God—of our Lord and Christ—in a lower degree, for the sake of pity and humanity—not for me, for I shall not long survive this part of the disgrace—spare us! or you will feel bitter remorse. More—our ruin will rise up one day in another shape, mark me! We know whose revenge it is: it is not yours.’”

He looked at it for a long time, steadily, then laid it down.

“It would not—could not be,” he said, slowly. “As well stop the wheels of a Juggernaut. Mine had to go over him; and it was well I did what I did. My foresight never deserted me; and I knew the election would come shortly, when the man, and his principles, and his influence, would have undone me. Where would I have been now? *He* would not have been above in that room; nor would he have spoken to me to-night as he did; nor would that daughter of his—”

He seized the bundle of letters, tied them hastily, and, flinging them into a drawer—heaping others over them—closed it with noise. Then the subject was gone from his mind; but he remained—his head on his hands, his eyes fixed on a spot of carpet near the door.

“If this Charles should fail in any way! But not one of them can be depended on. No one is like myself. All—all helpless, more or less.”

Then he remembered that there were letters—meshes in various spiders’ webs—to be written—half a dozen and more—to go by the morning’s post. These he wrote. It was three by the Benbow clock when he had done, and walked into a little room off his own, where there was a small brass bedstead, and then tried to sleep.

Such was Mr. Benbow, who, everyone said, was an ambitious man.

CHAPTER V.

WITH the morning, the master of the house was up and abroad betimes—indeed, with the gardener, giving him some most minute directions.

Just as the guests were coming in to breakfast, he called his son, and spoke to him calmly.

“I shall see and hear you,” he said, “though you may not think it.”

When Lady Rosa came in the young man walked up to her, and, with the true

blush of the *ingenuus puer*, bent before her with a splendid bouquet, and said, “I hope you will accept this, Lady Rosa, in place of the one I robbed you of last night. It was a sudden impulse, and I was carried away by the play.”

His father came up softly. Her father smiled. Mr. Benbow’s arm went round the shoulders of his son.

“Charles has been to few theatres. When I was his age I could hardly keep still in my place when I saw the ‘Castle Spectre.’ What is like Hassan’s dream, after all? I could say it now.”

The daughter laughed.

“I envy you, if you have not seen plays. I confess I am tired of them. When he is with us in town, he shall be taken to a regular course.”

Mr. Benbow, the father, struck in again, adroitly.

“His sympathies were all excited. He was talking of it to me for an hour in the study. He felt so for that poor Pauline, separated from her lover.”

Then Mr. Benbow turned to the Duke, to talk of the distinguished author.

“A very remarkable man—something of Sheridan about him. Dramatist, poet, speaker, and—”

“Sheridan wrote no novels,” said the Duke, much pleased at the opportunity for correction which Mr. Benbow might have left for him purposely.

“No; no more he did,” he said, in surprise. “That gives a superiority to Lytton.”

“And I am not aware that Sheridan wrote any parliamentary satirical poem—say of the character of ‘St. Stephen’s.’”

“No; he certainly did not. O, the modern writer is certainly the most versatile.”

Some such little weapons as these were always ready in the Benbow armoury, much as some careful lady would carry about a “housewife” in her pocket. These and much more were part of the laborious machinery he was working to try and repair the damage of last night. And when, about lunch-time, the Duke, addressing Charles, said good-humouredly, “I suppose the attractions of the stage will keep you away from us,” his father considered that all had been restored.

He called Charles aside, and bade him go out and ride, and never leave the side of Lady Rosa for his life.

“I have repaired the mischief done by

your folly of last night, and forgive you; but *mind*, take care it never happens again. Attend to me. Take care that nothing like it happens again."

The young Charles, thoroughly scared, put on a laborious devotion to the lady allotted to him. But he was carrying about a leaden heart. All about him seemed dark, and laid in dull, gloomy colours; but, as he would look out afar—beyond—to where was the soft light, the white clouds, the plaintive music, the bright angelic face, and he felt his heart aching and sinking, a sense of despair and blankness came over him, and he loathed the part he was playing. He longed to fling away all restraint, hurry out of the place, rush to the stable, and ride away headlong to the little town—to the theatre, where, at that moment, the play was beginning, and the divine Pauline having her affections won by the odious Hulkes.

He must do something to quiet his soul—the agitating flutter in his breast. Action in such cases is an advance forward, and may bring something to disturb the wearing monotony of expectancy. He would write—something complimentary. It seemed like an inspiration, and he wrote—

"DEAR MISS EFFINGHAM—Delightful 'last night' is still before me. Your enchanting tones are still in my ears. I never saw or heard anything to approach what I saw and heard last night. I shall never forget it. It seems like a sweet dream. Here they are still talking of it. All the judges say there was nothing ever like it. You seemed the real Pauline; and, oh! I think that odious Hulkes was very happy in being allowed to *imitate* even one who was allowed to adore you. If you would let me call upon you, and tell you all I think, and how delighted I was, it will be a great happiness to, yours always,

"CHARLES PELHAM BENBOW."

He felt much better and more at ease when he sent this off by a secret hand—an uncouth stable-boy, who was his serf. Now he had something to look forward to—to her answer. But none came, as yet.

His wary father still watched him the whole day.

In a sort of fevered flutter—half distressing, half delightful—the young man endured this *espionage*. He longed to rush to the stable, leap on his horse, and gallop away

furiously into Dipchester. His blood was in a fever; he could not rest calmly in one spot; and his enforced squireship of the aristocratic young lady was hateful to him. There was an over-acting, an over-eagerness in playing his part, which he made almost passionate in his attention and devotion.

His plan at the beginning of the day, and to which he always looked forward with a sort of painful yearning, was to rush away for two or three hours and see his charmer. But, with ever vigilant police, it became impossible. There was the morning, then lunch, then the ride; and his father, looking warily to the grand object he then had on hand, posted him duly, as a sergeant would sentries. And so that wretched dragging day went by until the dinner came round—the old regular state form—a time of agony for him; for he knew that the curtain was up, and the enchanting Pauline again showing her love for the sham prince, and passing through those cruel trials.

Still, with this weight at his heart, he acquitted himself respectably; and his father gravely commended him, made a sort of formal apology for his words of last night, and said that he had a great deal of sense.

"My dear boy," he said, with some warmth, "wait—only wait until you see what I shall do for you. We shall be the greatest family in England yet. You don't know—it can't enter into your head to conceive—all that I have planned—all the engines working at this moment. They little dream what schemes are in this head. You shall be a marquis when I am gone. Not that I care for a bare title; but *POWER* is the thing. Power, Charles—power is only got by connection. This Duke is a stupid man, but see what power he has: simply by the force of accumulated connection. Once let us weld on our family to his, and these connections are mine! It wants a clever man to put it all to use. I am that man. And now, my dear boy, as you have shown sense, I shall speak plainly to you. The sole and only difficulty in the way is the girl herself. She requires delicate management. Her father even can scarcely control her. She is cold and obstructive, and should she see the least backwardness or indifference in you, it would be *terrible*."

There was a strange tone in the way he used this word, as if the thought *was* terrible to him.

It was the longest of nights. These

words of his father *had* made some impression, and he saw there was truth in them. So, with a sort of spasmodic exertion, he really "made way," as it is called, and strove to mend his fault of the night before; and thus was laying up fresh troubles and anguish for himself.

When the ladies were gone, there were the men in the smoking-room, the noisy chatter, and the Duke himself, who was in a chatty humour, and attached himself to Charles.

"Yes, we shall have you at Banff. We leave this the day after to-morrow, and I have just settled with your father you must come with us."

"Go with you!" The young man gave a start.

"It will be no inconvenience, I assure you. I should like to have you with us, and Lady Rosa will like it too. And you must stay a long time. Capital deer-stalking and shooting."

"It is so kind," the young man murmured; "but I know it will put you out. Besides, I have preparations—"

The Duke laughed.

"A young man—preparations! Oh, very good. Ball-dresses, wreaths, flowers? Ah! no; we can understand young ladies, and their great black boxes, which take days to get ready. No scruples, my dear fellow. We shall be a little in the rough, and I shall expect no ceremony."

At last, at about two o'clock, he had got rid of them, and got away to his own room, where he could be alone and think. Joy, rapture! On the table there was a tiny note, directed in a lady's hand. He flung himself on it, opened, and read—

"DEAR MR. BENBOW—Your letter made me happy. Such testimonies are always welcome, and encourage. I should be very glad to see you any time you would like to call, and should like to hear you *tell me things*. Yes, you pity me with Mr. Hulkes. I knew you would. But this is one of the incidents of the profession. If we had no more than *that* to suffer! But I am getting accustomed to it all. Have you thought of this?—your family can hardly approve of you so *honouring a mere actress*. Certainly not your father. Believe me, it is better to look on from the boxes, and think of me only as Pauline. That distance lends such enchantment. Yes, come and see me, and admire me if you will—on the stage, and in

my stage finery. Yours is not the only letter of praise I have received. I have two before me now, and set them side by side: one is that of a gentleman, the other that of a low, mean vulgarian. This last, *another* of our trials.—Always yours,

"LYDIA EFFINGHAM."

This threw him into an ecstasy. It was the most *piquant*, charming letter—nothing low, everything not only ladylike—(a poor compliment, after all, for "ladylike" stands for a dead level, conventional thing)—but it was womanly, heroic, noble, and like Pauline. He knew the dastardly rascal that was troubling her—the low, vulgar scoundrel that was thrusting his attentions on her, and with the lowest motives.

That gave him a sacred trust; he was bound to shield and protect her—a charming, interesting, divine creature, who had no protector. It was enough bliss for that night. Within the four corners of the page he could see a small, glittering view of the night—that blissful night: the look of the writing brought the whole scene before him. He could kiss its delicate characters several times over; he could lay it tenderly on his dressing-table—on a sort of throne of honour.

He had the sweetest sleep and the most delightful dreams. In short, he was "a boy in love," which means the Arabian Nights' Stories, with all the treasures of enchantment, jewels, gold, silver, and beauty, laid open.

On the next day he must see her: he would brave all that dukes, fathers, or high-born girls would do to prevent him. He forgot all the difficulties in the way, the "persecution" that was likely to arise, and slept rapturously.

THE BIRDS OF LONDON.

WE are all so accustomed to associate birds—"the smiles of creation"—with all that is wild, and fresh, and pleasant, and unlike a great town, that the title of this paper may seem at first sight almost paradoxical. It is, however, one great advantage which an ornithologist has over most other lovers of natural history, that there are few places—excepting, perhaps, where robins and tomtits have been too long marketable delicacies, and where, as in

some parts of the Continent, woods and plantations are dying off in consequence—in which he cannot find something in his own particular line to interest him; and London is no exception to the rule. In some respects, indeed, we are exceptionally favoured.

To begin with, there are, of course, the splendid collections, dead and alive, in the British Museum and Zoological Gardens. There are the bird-stuffers' windows, into which a good proportion of the curious birds shot in the kingdom are sure to find their way. There are Leadenhall Market and the game-dealers' shops, with constantly changing supplies all through the year; and, in hard weather, there are the wild fowl hawkers about the streets, with great bunches of stints, curlews, and oyster-catchers, doing duty as snipe and woodcock, and pochards and mallard, and mergansers, "ancient and fish-like" enough to be smelt across the street, with their tell-tale saw beaks broken to make them widgeon.

But leaving these out of the question, there are genuine wild birds of London; and it may, perhaps, be a surprise to some readers to learn that a note-book of those seen in the course of three-quarters of a year, in the immediate neighbourhood of Hyde Park, contains the names of more than twenty species, and shows that we have occasional visits from representatives of five at least of the six great natural orders into which birds are divided.

The exception is the class of the "birds of prey"—"low-foreheaded tyrants"—the first in scientific arrangement, but, according to a modern writer, the lowest almost of all in everything but brute force, because they can neither build nor sing.

Of the second, the "passerine"—the enormous order into which are jumbled all which cannot be classed as birds of prey or poultry, and which, as a rule, neither climb, nor wade, nor swim—we have a very respectable party—not less than sixteen or seventeen.

First in the list come the thrushes—the most timid, perhaps, of all; but, by one of the apparent contradictions with which all classifications abound, nearly related to the shrikes, which are the connecting link between the passerines and the birds of prey, and, in their own degree, scarcely less tyrants than the eagles themselves. Song-thrushes are fairly common in Kensington-gardens,

and sing beautifully at times; though, as a rule, they are very shy. During the middle of the day they manage, to a great extent, to keep out of sight; and it is not often, when many people are about, that they show themselves in any considerable numbers. But when the gates are first open, and the early morning dew is on the grass, one may see them—four or five at a time—stamping to start the worms, then hopping for a yard or two, and standing still to listen, with their heads on one side, and their bright eyes sparkling with attention.

Blackbirds, too, are common, though less so than thrushes; and are, probably, migratory with us, as they are more plentiful at some times of the year than at others.

Fieldfares and redwings are to be seen occasionally in cold weather; but we have no great supply of berries to attract them, and their visits are short.

But though, by right of their voices no less than the notch in their beaks, the thrushes claim the place of honour; easily first among London birds, by numbers as well as impudence, are the sparrows.

Poking about in every gutter, and dusting themselves almost under the horses' feet with all the amusing self-possession of street urchins, they take care not to be overlooked. But for one dark, quiet house in a corner by the kangaroos, the Zoological Gardens might be the happy hunting-ground of good sparrows. Dainties are to be had for the stealing all over the place, and even the lions and bears and eagles are too sleepy and well-fed to resent any amount of petty larcenies. It is a melancholy thing, though, to see the end when it does come. The snakes are fed one afternoon in the week, and five or six tailless sparrows are a dainty meal. Unlike the rabbits and guinea pigs, who will nibble and sniff at a python's nose, they seem too wide-awake to doubt their fate for a moment, and crouch together in a corner, the picture of dejection—till, if the snakes are hungry, there is a sudden flutter, and the miserable party scuttle over to another corner, one short in numbers; and one may see a little bunch of feathers, at all sorts of impossible angles, peeping out from a coil of scales. The stroke is almost quicker than the eye can follow.

London sparrows evidently look upon Corinthian capitols as designed for their especial convenience in the nesting season; and Bishop Stanley tells of one pair which

had the impertinence to build in the mouth of the lion on Northumberland House.

With all its ragged untidiness, few things are grander in suggestion than a sparrow's nest on Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's. It carries one back to the days when the author of the Eighty-fourth Psalm watched the birds building in the niches of Solomon's temple—then, perhaps, in its first glory—and wrote, in words which have still all the freshness of three thousand years ago—"The sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young; even thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God." The commonest sparrows in the Holy Land, though not actually the same, are almost identical with our own house sparrows.

Of the buntings, the only two which figure in the list are a cock yellowhammer, picked up dead in the Green Park, apparently starved to death; and another, seen in St. James's-square. The latter was unluckily very tame, and paid dearly for a meal in the gutter, only just managing to flutter on to Lord Derby's house, much the worse for a cut from a cabman's whip.

Starlings build in numbers in the hollow trees; and, with the inhabitants of the ten or twelve rooks' nests in Kensington-gardens and the Marylebone-road, and a few grey-headed jackdaws, make themselves generally at home among the sheep, and are as talkative and merry as in the reed beds on the Norfolk broads.

A pair of chaffinches were seen more than once in April, very busy collecting moss for a nest, between Victoria-gate and the fountains; and two rather dingy little blue-tits were carefully investigating the trees close by, evidently with the same views. Two cole-tits, too, occasionally show themselves in the Gardens.

Martens in plenty, and probably swallows with them, play on the ornamental waters, and build in several parts of London. There were three nests last spring in St. James's-street, two over Boss's—the gun-maker's—shop, two more in Porchester-place, and three on a blank wall in Upper Seymour-street. "Where they most breed and haunt, the air is delicate," and their mud-houses are a compliment to our improved drainage. But perhaps the most unlikely of all our London visitors in 1869 were two little parties of wheatears, who spent a few days, one in Hyde the other in Regent's

Park, about the same time in August last. They are very inquisitive little fellows; and, though they will whisk off their pretty white tails before one gets very near them, they cannot go far without stopping for another good stare. They are trapped in numbers in parts of England and France, in little holes cut in the turf, and commanded by common brick-falls. No bait is required, as they cannot resist the temptation to hop in to explore, and their next appearance in public is probably in vine leaves.

A few robins, a single wren, and a lark, seen on two consecutive days in Hyde Park and the Green Park, complete the list of this order; though there is no doubt that, with a little longer observation, others might be added.

The "climbers" are not well represented, the only one that appears being a single vagabond cuckoo, who found his way into Hyde Park on the 8th of May, and left in the direction of Park-lane. Excepting that they have two toes in front and two behind—the distinguishing feature of the class—the cuckoos have little or nothing in common with the "climbers" proper; but a visit from one of them is just enough to give us a claim to the woodpeckers as a London family.

Several pairs of wood pigeons build every year in Kensington-gardens; and anyone who cares to exchange the smart carriages in the ladies' mile for a chair and a book in a quiet corner may watch them billing and cooing, and listen as long as he likes to the "deep mellow crush" of their note in the trees overhead. The wood pigeons are probably the only wild species of the *gallinaciae* in London; but there is one very fine fellow to be seen at times in St. James's Park who deserves special mention. He is a cross between a cock pheasant and a common hen, and has very nearly the head and neck of his father, with a half-dock tail; and can fly, if occasion requires it, like a genuine rocketeer. He is said to be three or four years old, and is a very handsome and curious bird.

In the next order, the "waders," we have moorhens in plenty. In St. James's Park they are tame, and will scramble with the ducks for bread from the bridge; but their habits are more natural in the Long Water. There one may watch them paddling about, jerking their tails, or prying about shyly for what they can find on the grass outside the

little cover by the water's edge. It is impossible to help believing that a moorhen has an eye for natural beauties, and chooses the overhanging bough or fallen tree by the water for her nest, for picturesqueness quite as much as for convenience.

Hérons occasionally fly over London; but it is not likely that they often alight. Like most aboriginal tribes, they are gradually dwindling away before the progress of civilization; and soon, if we wish to see them wild, we may have to go to the Dutch ditches or the unreclaimable swamps of America.

According to Michelet, whose delightful little book, "*L'Oiseau*," all bird-lovers should read, the heron knows he is the degenerate representative of a dethroned race of kings; and mopes in solitude, dreaming of the days of his glory, when his ancestors, the giant waders who left their footmarks in the secondary rocks, fought with great lizards and flying dragons, ages before a single mammal had appeared upon the earth. All the birds of which there are any very early traces were of the heron tribe, and some of them must have been of enormous size. There are three-toed footprints in the red sandstone of the Connecticut which are said to "measure eighteen inches in length and nearly thirteen in breadth; and to indicate, by their distance apart in a straight line, a stride of six feet."

"They tell," says Hugh Miller, "of a time far removed into the by-past eternity, when great birds frequented by myriads the shores of a nameless lake, to wade in the shallows in quest of its mail-covered fishes of the ancient type, or long extinct molluscs; while reptiles, equally gigantic, and of still stranger proportions, haunted the neighbouring swamps; and when the same sun that shone on the tall moving forms beside the waters, and threw their long shadows across the red sands, lighted up the glades of deep forests, all of whose fantastic productions—tree, bush, and herb—have, even in their very species, long since passed away." There is no place the birds might be supposed to feel the change of times more than here. The Thames-side in old days must have been a paradise for long-legged birds; and even chaos itself and the modern world could be scarcely more unlike than the country round the little village of the Trinobantes and the miles of brick and smoke two old herons looked down upon

who flapped over London from the Essex marshes one day in August last. It is said that a very little time ago it was not uncommon to flush a snipe in Hyde Park, between Victoria-gate and the Marble Arch; but the improvements of the last few years have probably banished them, at least till the time of Lord Macaulay's New Zealander. According to the *Field*, however, a wounded woodcock was picked up in a street in the City one morning last November. He had shared the fate of many of his kind, and had broken his wing with a telegraph wire in flying over at night.

It is interesting to notice how soon resident birds learn the danger of the wires. When a line was first put up for a few miles along the coast from Cromer, partridges, woodcocks, and small birds—larks particularly—were constantly picked up more or less mutilated; but, before the wires were up many months, it was a rare thing to find a wounded bird.

Passing on to the sixth and last order, the web-footed, the ornamental waters in the parks are so well stocked with the different breeds of ducks, that it is impossible to say to what extent they are frequented by genuine wild fowl. There is no doubt, though, that the number of occasional visitants is considerable; and, of those who are permanently quartered on the Serpentine, many fly strongly, and are, to all intents and purposes, wild birds.

Unlike most of us, their hours in London and the country are much the same. Flighting time—just as the last remains of the blurred red and blue which gives its peculiar picturesqueness to sunset in a big town, is fading in the fog—is their favourite exercise time. And one may stand on the Serpentine bridge almost any autumn evening, and listen to mallard and widgeon whistling over head, till one's fingers twitch for a trigger; and, with a very small stretch of imagination, the Long Water becomes a tidal harbour, and the distant roar of Oxford-street changes into the break of the sea outside the sand-hills.

In St. James's Park alone, besides black and white swans, and ten sorts of geese—four of them English: Brent, bean, white-fronted, and bernacle—there are at the present time not less than nineteen or twenty distinct species of ducks, with five or six crosses, including one beautiful one between the exquisite little Carolina and

red-headed pochard. About two-thirds are British, ranging in rarity from the widgeon and pochards—which still swarm in winter in the ponds and runlets in many parts of the coast—to the castaneous ducks and delicately pencilled gadwall, one of the shyest and rarest of our English waterfowl.

The list includes, besides those already mentioned—mallard, common teal, and garganeys, shovellers, pintails, the common shell-ducks which breed in the rabbit holes among the sand-hills by the sea, and the rarer “ruddy” species, the tufted; and, perhaps, most generally attractive of all, two or three golden-eyes, with their brilliant blue-back and white plumage, and the eye, like a little drop of liquid gold, which gives them their name. They and the tufted and red-headed pochards are the life of the party, and are scarcely still for a moment together. It is amusing, in a general scramble for bread from the bridge, to watch them diving under the ruck, and popping up to snatch a crust from the very mouth of some sleepy fellow twice their own size, hunted in turn by half a dozen others as wide-awake as themselves.

The first black swans which were imported from Australia could not at all understand the complication of the seasons which a change of hemispheres involved; and at Mr. Gurney's, at Carshalton, one brood of little ones was hatched when snow was on the ground, unhappily only to survive in a handsome glass case. They have accommodated themselves to circumstances better now, and some fine young birds were brought up safely in St. James's Park this spring. The cygnets in the down are very like young white swans.

A single tern, noticed one blustering day a few winters ago, introduces the “long-wings,” the poetical family of the albatross and frigate bird. Unluckily, he was some distance off, and could not be identified with perfect certainty; but a party of kittewakes who paid a visit to the Serpentine when Mr. Sykes's “Sea-birds Preservation Bill” was under discussion last spring, found themselves great people, and had all their movements chronicled in the fashionable news. They stayed with us some time, and were watched with pleasure by hundreds.

What Campbell wrote of the wild flowers is doubly true of the birds associated with the scenes of our childhood. They can “wake forgotten affections,” and “waft us

to summers” and winters “of old;” and, probably, others beside the writer felt something not unlike a touch of home-sickness at the sight of their white breasts glancing in the sunshine.

Of the last family of all, the shortwings—the connecting link between birds and fishes—we have plenty of a single species, the little grebe, “dabchicks.” There are at times no less than one hundred of them on the Round Pond; but they come and go unaccountably; and, within a few days, the place may be alive with them and deserted again. As a rule, though, there are ten or a dozen at least to be seen feeding tolerably near the edge, and of late they have been common, too, on the other waters in the parks. With these lively little fellows—the quickest and best, perhaps, of our English divers, as much at home at the bottom as above the water—our list for the present must end.

One of the greatest disadvantages of life in a great town like London is its artificialness. Man and his works are everywhere, and leave no room for “God's great second volume”—Nature. Anything which can take us out of ourselves, if only for a few minutes, is so rare that we cannot afford to overlook it: and if this paper is the means of calling any town reader's attention for the first time to the Birds of London, and showing that we have really some to take an interest in, it will have awakened a new power of enjoyment, and will have done more than he may at first suppose to add to his happiness.

THE SPRING EXHIBITIONS.

AT the New British Institution, the landscapes are numerically strong, and are of a higher order of merit than the figure-subjects and pictures of still life. In round numbers, some six hundred works were sent in, and these are almost all the production of artists who are known to the public as regular exhibitors at the galleries. Of this number, two hundred and eleven different canvases have been selected as worthy of being hung on the walls. There is a great sameness of merit among them. Nothing is very good, and nothing is very bad. But allowance must of course be made for the first exhibition of the new institution. And at the next and succeeding displays at 39, Old Bond-street, we may expect to see some-

thing better worthy of being regarded as a fit successor to the annual exhibitions of the old "British." No. 10, "The Fisher Girl," is a very clever little sketch of Mr. Faed's, presenting an appearance of rapid but skilful execution. No. 28, "A Grey Dawn on the Coast of Kent," by Mr. Walter Williams, has considerable merit, and presents a very pretty and pleasing sunlight effect. No. 34, "A Study from Nature at Fontainebleau," by A. Örtmanns, is a small but exquisitely natural sketch. The trunks of the trees which compose the picture are very truthfully rendered. No. 35, "The Bee Master," does credit to Mr. Gale, the painter. It represents an old man making plaits of straw for his hive. At his feet, a little child is looking up trustfully into his face—

"Then, turning from his task, the old man smiled,
Pleased with the merry prattling of the child."

No. 67, by E. N. Downard, "The Last of 'Old Driver,'" is painted with feeling. The old shepherd is regarding the dead companion of his watchings with looks of sorrowful regard. The sentiment of the picture appeals at once to all who look at it, and must needs enlist their sympathies; but, in point of manipulation, the work is not altogether satisfactory. No. 108, "Land at Last," exhibits a child rescued from the waves by a brawny and stalwart sailor. The contrast between the pale face and frail figure of the child, and the ruddy, sunburnt complexion and robust frame of the man, is striking and effective. "French Shepherds going to Midnight Mass," No. 113, is a work possessing merit, but the sky strikes us as much too clear and bright for a midnight scene. The two figures holding lanterns would be seen to more advantage if the tone of the picture were darker. The reflected lights are comparatively lost from the general lightness of the picture. Mr. Lehmann's "Portrait of a Lady," No. 149, is well done. The Russian fur round the lady's neck is admirably painted. No. 182, "Glen Etire, near Glencoe," by J. Docharty, does the artist the greatest credit. The rocks are bold, crisp, and rugged in outline, and stand out prominently in the foreground. Altogether, this is one of the best pictures in the exhibition. Mr. Dicksee's "Ophelia" is carefully painted; but the type of feature is not sufficiently refined for a truthful portraiture of Shakspeare's

heroine. No. 206—a little bit of landscape by Mr. A. Cole—is beautifully painted. "On Rake Hill, Hants," is just the place where an artist would love to linger. No. 198, by J. E. Newton, is a striking picture.

"Ever and anon the wind,
Sweet-scented with the hay,
Turned o'er the hymn-book's fluttering leaves
That in the window lay;"

is the verse of Longfellow's that furnishes both title and subject. We do not exactly approve of the manner in which the artist has painted his picture. The treatment is pre-Raphaelite, and the handling is very careful and painstaking; but a yellowish-green haze that pervades the work rather mars than heightens the general effect. The idea is a very good one, but the details of the work are stiff and hard. Still, in despite of these defects, the little sketch is eminently suggestive. Altogether, the collection of pictures brought together by the enterprise of the promoters is worth a visit, and will repay the time spent in seeing it. The New British may reasonably expect a successful future.

The Seventeenth Annual Exhibition of French and Flemish pictures, at the Gallery, 120, Pall Mall, this year consists of two hundred and nineteen works in oil, and some thirty or forty water-colour drawings, which are shown in a separate room.

The exhibition affords those interested in art an opportunity of observing the peculiar merits and defects of some of the leading foreign artists, and of comparing their productions with works shown at other galleries, which are the offspring of native talent.

The display of pictures at the "French and Flemish," though never very extensive, always comprises works of high merit, and this year is no exception to the rule. The general contents of the exhibition are equal to anything shown in Pall Mall in previous years, and some of the pictures were generally and deservedly admired.

No. 16, "The Moon is up, and yet it is not Night," by A. Wahlberg, is both a pretty and effective canvas. The landscape, with moon reflected in a sheet of water, is treated with great skill. No. 17, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" by Ary Scheffer, presents the figure of the Saviour looking over the doomed city. The face is full of sorrow, and the eye melts in tears. The colouring of the drapery is happy, and the general tone of the

picture pleasing. No. 22, "Treasured Mementoes," by Saintin, is a fine study of a female figure. The head and the hands are the only light parts of the picture, and in these the flesh is well painted. The drapery is sombre, and the tone of the picture low; but the effect is good, and the accessories are admirably brought out. No. 25, "The Favourite Author," by F. H. Kaemmerer, is a clever picture of a male figure, sitting on a sofa, reading.

No. 47, Meissonier's "Qui va là," is, of course, one of the gems of the collection. The expression of watchfulness depicted in the attitude and features of the sentry is eminently truthful. The background to this picture is formed by the tapestry-hung walls of the room in which the soldier stands, and is very carefully painted.

Another production of the same distinguished artist, and probably intended as a companion picture, is "The Halberdier on Guard." It is very carefully and cleverly painted. In this picture the background is weaker, and is, indeed, poor in character. Of the pair by Meissonier, "Qui va là" is certainly preferable in all ways to "The Halberdier on Guard."

No. 69, a "Game at Chess, Cairo," is a striking picture, by J. L. Gérôme. It is not without faults, however. The shadows are altogether too black, and there is a hardness of outline in the design, which is unpleasant. Groups of soldiers in many-coloured uniforms are standing round the players, watching the game intently. The draperies are very bright, and well painted, and the attitudes of the figures are natural and lifelike.

The draperies in two pictures from the easel of Alfred Stevens—one of them lent by the King of the Belgians—are wonderfully rendered, and, altogether, the accessories are perfect. In No. 75, "Nonchalance," a white muslin dress over a pink slip worn by the lady is a marvel of execution. In the other picture, "La Visite," the dresses of the ladies are equally well done.

No. 101, "Treblou, in Brittany," is an exquisite bit of landscape from the pencil of Th. Weber.

No. 119, "Expectation," by Bakalowicz, is another picture remarkable for the careful and clever rendering of the drapery. The blue velvet dress of the lady is given to perfection. Indeed, one of the most prominent and noticeable features at these exhibitions of the works of French and Flemish

painters in Pall Mall is the admirable manner in which, in almost every instance in which they attempt them, the artists of these schools succeed in representing textile fabrics.

No. 133, "The Opening of the Sheepfold," by Braith, shows us the figure of a shepherd opening the hurdle for his flock to escape. The sheep are carefully painted, and very natural. "The Weary Shepherd," by the same artist, presents similar features, and is an equally pleasing production.

No. 139, a mere sketch, but full of character, by A. Schreyer, "A Wallachian Chariot, escorted by Cossacks." The horses are finely drawn, though only hastily dashed in.

No. 179, "The Ruined Gambler," by C. Schrandolph, is carefully painted; and the expression of the leading figure, the unfortunate victim, is very well given.

No. 192, "The Separation of Madame Elizabeth from her Niece, Maria Theresa," is one of the best pictures in the exhibition, and does great credit to the skill of the painter. It is the work of E. Meisel. On a canvas of moderate dimensions is shown the interior of the place of confinement, which is carefully and well painted. The figures of the two ladies are very striking, and they show signs of great distress, contrasting forcibly with the manifest unconcern of a bystander who is a witness of the touching scene.

No. 202, "The Orphans," by Perrault, represents a group of sisters who, apparently, have lost their father and mother. The sentiment of the picture is affecting, and the sweet faces and plaintive looks of the orphans appeal to the kindly feelings of all who look at it. The picture all through exhibits great care and skill in manipulation, the black draperies being relieved by pieces of white muslin introduced in the sleeves of the child. This picture will be admired as much—by ladies, at all events—as any in the exhibition.

Altogether the hour or two spent by us in looking at the pictures in the French and Flemish Exhibition in Pall Mall, has left a very favourable impression on our minds; and many other pictures, in addition to those mentioned already, might fairly have called for some notice at our hands, had not the limited space at our disposal compelled us to pass them by with no further recognition than an approving glance.

THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK III.—CHAPTER III.

A SERIOUS PROPOSAL.

"YELLOW on white now!" cried one of Mr. Jack Childers's innumerable cousins, who was spending a few days at Childersley Abbey with his relatives.

"What are you at?" exclaimed Mr. Jack himself, putting the butt-end of his cue before the yellow ball. "Play with your own ball—come."

The white lay in a tempting position just over the pocket.

"Oh, ah! mine is the white; I forgot," replied Malton, carelessly accepting the correction.

"Single pool," said the cousin standing by the marking-board; "one life each."

"Yes," observed Mr. Jack to his noble friend, "I could not let you ram your own down with mine, you know, without telling you. Position's everything at this game."

"By Jove! missed you after all," said Malton, as his opponent's ball twisted and spun round the corner of the table without dropping into the pocket. "I am not in form at all to-night."

"You are thinking of your *vis-à-vis* at dinner, Marquis," said the cousin.

Malton smiled his peculiar little thin smile, and showed his sharp, white teeth, looking rather pleased than not.

"Never mind," said he, "I won't let you off again; so, look out, Jack."

But Mr. Jack Childers was rather more than a match for the unsteady hand of the Marquis.

"Well, Jack takes the pool," said the cousin, with the poor man's regard for the rich man's money.

The bait took instantly, as this scion of the House of Childers knew from experience it would. Malton offered to back himself at pool, with odds really of some three to one against him, as he would have put down his money on his horses, or the rat-killing powers of his dogs, or the toss-up of a coin, or pulling the longer bent from a rick of hay, or, indeed, on anything about which a bet could be made. His friend and follower, Jack Childers, generally had a balance

in his favour after his numerous sporting transactions with the noble Malton.

"Jack wins for five," cried the cousin.

"Not after such a shot as my last," answered Malton, prudent for the time. "Not good enough, Childers."

"It's only even betting," said the cousin; "one life each."

Mr. Jack, having taken his stroke, had left a not very difficult hazard on.

Seeing the position of the balls, Malton called out, "Here, I'll take short odds."

"Go on then. Five to four."

Malton gave a quiet nod of assent, and took his stroke. It was not a brilliant one.

Now it was Jack's turn. Just as he drew back his arm to strike, his eyes closed, and a scarcely perceptible shiver passed over him.

"Dam," said Malton, "my money's gone now, I know."

Mr. Jack Childers was subject pretty frequently to these attacks. His friends called them fits—though the faculty might have a more specific name for them—and, whenever they saw the seizure coming on, they made use of language more strong than polite. Jack always put a ball down after one of his fits. This time down went the white, sure enough, with unerring aim, and yellow and the cousin won.

It was in the billiard-room at Childersley Abbey that this conversation took place. The Childerses had invited our friends from the Chase to dine with them at the Abbey; and Miss Margaret and her brother Robert, with Mabel and Malton, had accepted the invitation, and been driven ten or a dozen miles over the indifferent roads that lay between Madingley and the Abbey. Sir Harold, who had gone out very little for some months, had declined to accompany them. The party was a small one, the only other guests being old Squire Frampton and two of his daughters—bony, angular, red-faced young women, disagreeably like the Squire, their father.

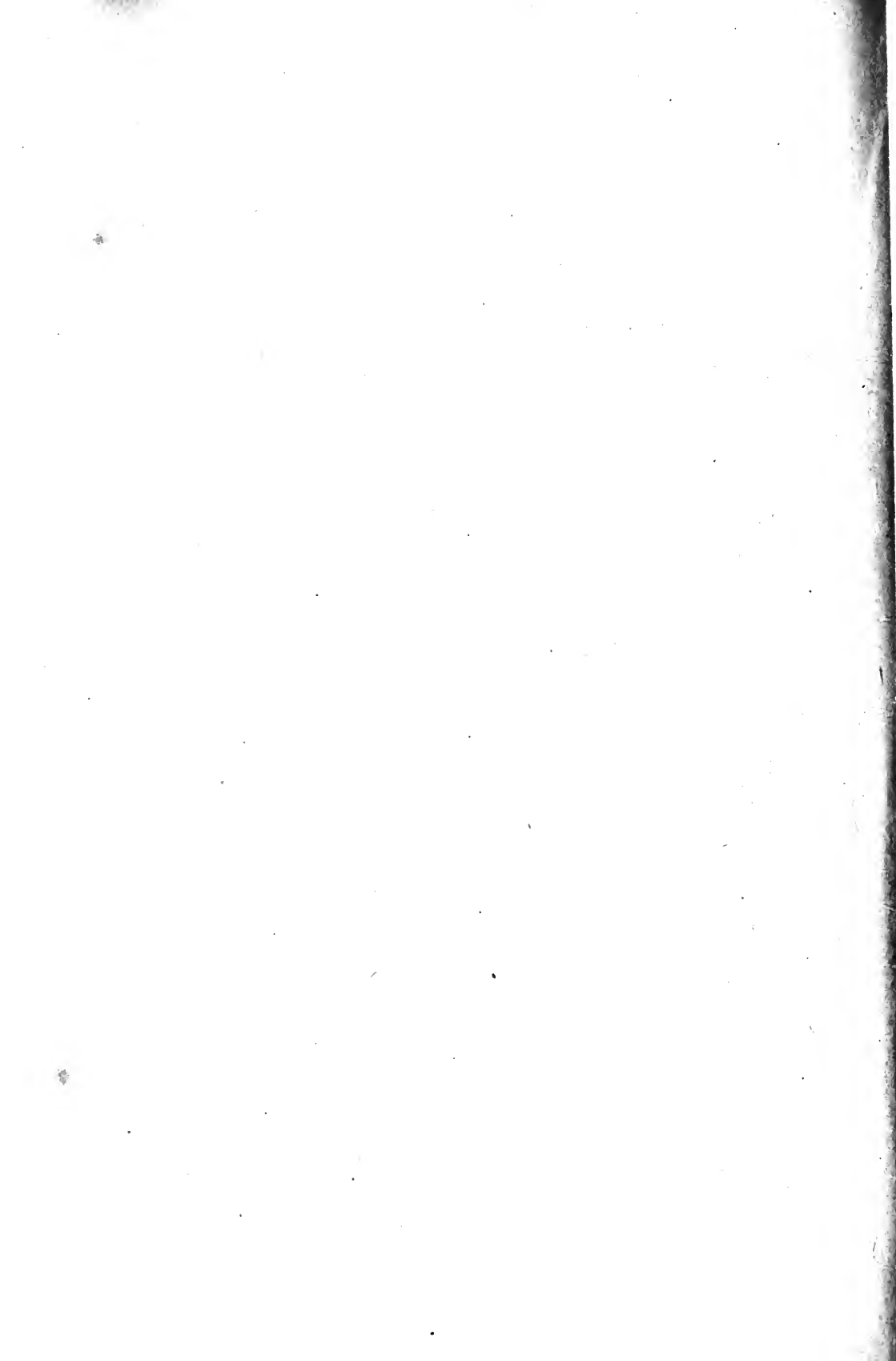
"Their talk is always about bullocks," Robert Mortimer had remarked, when he consented to Miss Margaret's accepting the invitation in his behalf. Notwithstanding this he thought proper to go. In the carriage, on the way there, he was very taciturn, taking no part in the conversation, and replying to his sister's observations in monosyllables. Malton and Miss Mabel were too busily employed in chatting and flirting with



Once a Week.]

[April 23, 1870.

“MR. BENBOW’S ARM WENT ROUND THE SHOULDERS OF HIS SON.”—Page 245.



each other to pay much attention to the doings of their elders.

"Tell you what, Mab," said Malton to Miss Despencer, at dinner, "that horrible bore and prig, Bob, was making up some speech or other all the way here, I believe."

"Do you think he was?"

"I know he was. If he begins to give it us going back, I shall get out and walk, or ride on the box with Salter. I can't stand him—he is such a confounded humbug."

"But you'd never get back to the Chase if you did, Marquis," said Mabel, archly; "you know you're not strong, and you never walk well after dinner."

"Thank you, Miss Despencer. But I say, Mabel, I'll be—that is—I won't go back again a hundred miles with my back to the horses. I'll borrow a trap of Childers, or take the ribbons from Salter first."

"Does it make the poor boy's back ache?" asked the mischievous young lady.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Malton, without replying to Mabel's inquiry about his stiffness, "I've an idea, Mabel."

"Well, Malton, what is it?"

"If you will persuade Aunt Margaret to get out for half a minute when I have got the reins, I'll turn Bob Mortimer into a ditch. I should love to do it. I do hate him so."

Miss Margaret Mortimer, though always known as Aunt Margaret to Mabel, Malton, and Charles Mortimer, was, of course, only aunt in reality to the latter. Her name of endearing relationship was bestowed upon her by these three—over whom she had watched, almost from infancy, with a mother's kindness and care—upon much the same unreasoning principle as that on which all the village accorded to her the title of "My Lady," and spoke of her as "Her Ladyship."

In reply to Malton's candid expression of his feelings towards Robert Mortimer, Mabel said, "Don't say such horribly wicked things, you naughty boy. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

But as our readers cannot hear the sweet accents of her silvery voice, in the interests of justice we must say that the young lady's remark was made in a way calculated rather to encourage than repress Malton's "horribly wicked" suggestions. Probably, though she did not say so, she shared to the full in his dislike of the Member for Malton, and was not one bit dazzled by his speeches or his official Pink Tape.

Dining was a very slow and tedious affair. Robert Mortimer entered into conversation with his entertainer and Squire Frampton on county topics, and on political matters generally, very much shocking their Tory scruples by his wild and furious Radicalism. Fencing adroitly with the agricultural Squire, and the sporting owner of Childersley Abbey, and the many mortgages thereunto appertaining; laughing in his sleeve at them as he pushed them hard with his logical arguments; making allusions and references to matters far beyond their power of understanding; and, so to speak, getting first one and then the other into a corner, and there making them accept the horns of his dilemmas, to their utter confusion.

When a country gentleman, of ancient lineage and respectable descent, takes it upon himself to make a matrimonial alliance, he must needs be careful what he is about. The County must know all about the matter for ever so long before, and must have its say in the matter. The County must be coaxed, cajoled, propitiated. The County must be feasted and entertained. Especially, the County must give its consent to the match, and set the seal of its approbation on the nuptials. Or the wrong done it will never after be forgotten.

Now, John Childers, of Childersley Abbey, Esquire, had omitted all these preliminaries; he had chosen his wife without giving the County the slightest intimation of what he was about to do. And the County had punished him severely for his neglect. Of course receiving an actress old enough to be his mother into the very bosom of the county families was out of the question altogether. For jolly, random Jack Childers there was still a welcome; but for his wife—had he one? Nobody ever saw her; and, as long as she lived, dinner parties at the Abbey were out of the question.

For a long time the old place was shut up, and grass grew in the ruts wherein the coach-wheels of the great county families no longer rolled. But when he was left a widower, with two hopeful sons, matters were very much improved, and the Abbey gates were opened again as of yore.

The owner of Childersley still wore a deep black band round his hat when Miss Margaret Mortimer paid this visit to the Abbey. Since the death of his wife, his sister, Mrs. Carington, had done the honours of his house.

"Come, Robert," said his sister, when the gentlemen joined them in the drawing-room, "I think we had better ask to have the carriage ordered."

"Oh, pray do not hurry away from us, Miss Mortimer," said Mrs. Carington, politely pressing her guest to remain.

"Thank you; but I fear there will be no moon to-night after eleven, and we shall be quite an hour driving back to Madingley. What do you think, Robert? You know I shall be afraid to be in the dark."

"I am ready whenever you are," her brother replied.

"But where are the young men?" asked their host; "we thought they were with you."

"They left us ever so long ago."

"We have seen nothing of them, Mr. Childers," Miss Margaret replied.

"I can see a light in the billiard-room," said Mrs. Carington; "I suppose they are there."

"We thought they were with you all the while," her brother said; adding apologetically, "John is so fond of billiards."

"I have no doubt Malton proposed it," said Robert Mortimer.

"His lordship's compliments, and he thinks he shall stay all night," said the servant, who had been despatched to summon Malton to take his seat in the carriage, when he returned from his errand.

"I should not be at all surprised if he did," Robert Mortimer remarked, in reply to Miss Margaret's expression of wonder, "and lose his money to that drinking and card-playing pair, of whose company he seems so fond."

"I think, Robert," said Miss Margaret, with her usual charity, "you're a little unjust. Perhaps he does not know we are in the carriage, and only said he should stay in joke."

"Perhaps so," replied her brother, with a sarcastic smile on his pale features.

"I will fetch him," said Mabel Despencer, who had just made her appearance, looking very bewitching in her hood and cloak; "I know the way—I will make him come." And so saying, she bounded off down one of the long passages of the old Abbey towards the billiard-room.

"Jack has asked me to stay," said Malton, "and I shall."

"You will put on your hat and come with us this instant," said Mabel, stamping

her little foot impatiently, and making a playfully angry grimace.

"Oh, do let him stay, Miss Despencer," pleaded Jack, who did not want to lose his friend so soon; "we have only had two or three games, I assure you."

"Do spare him," echoed the cousin.

"We will promise not to keep him up late, and also to return him safely," further pleaded Jack.

"I want to stay," urged Malton. "Bob will bore us to death all the way back—I know he will—with some confounded speech or other."

"Come, sir," was all Mabel said, stamping her foot again, and proof against all entreaty. "Come, sir, your hat, and get into the carriage—we are waiting."

Whereupon Malton obeyed with a good grace; and, handing her into the carriage, took his place on the seat with his poor back to the horses, by Robert Mortimer's side; and, wishing their friends good night, they drove off at a good round pace towards home. Malton was agreeably disappointed in his surmise. The M.P. was, after the first mile or two, entirely wrapped up in his reflections, and apparently dozed off in his own corner. Miss Margaret also fell into a somnolent condition, only waking up now and then as a severe jolt shook the carriage. And Malton talked to Mabel all the way back, discoursing in his own peculiar slangy style on matters more interesting to himself than to the young lady—who, I fear, did not care one pin whether The Trojan or Miss Whip's dam colt won the coming "Two Thousand" at Newmarket, on which race his lordship had a heavy book.

Just as the carriage pulled up at the gates of the Chase, Robert Mortimer woke up. Putting his hand into the recesses of his coat pocket, he pulled his handkerchief out with a tug, inadvertently flirting something hard and bright out with it. The something struck Malton's varnished boot, and, glancing off, fell among the folds of the rug at his feet. The Member of Parliament nervously made a dart to recover it; and, seizing it, replaced it in the pocket of his swallow-tail. The incident was hardly noticed by anybody but himself.

Brady, when he folded his master's coat half an hour afterwards, made a discovery of the contents of the pocket; and, posing the hard and bright something in his hand, muttered—"This here boiler'll blow up

some of these fine days, and won't there be a pothor! I don't know what to do—sharp as a razor; but what a fool!"

"Beg pardon, yer ludship, but what time shall I disturb yer ludship in the morning?" inquired Malton's gentleman, as he left his master's chamber.

"Oh, get me up early, Jones—I've something particular to attend to to-morrow."

"Yes, yer ludship," answered the faithful valet. "Beg pardon, yer ludship, ten o'clock?"

"Yes, don't bother—you've always so many doosid questions to ask," said his master, from under the clothes.

"Beg yer ludship's pardon. Good night, my lud."

The morning came, his lordship rose at least an hour earlier than was his wont. Always very particular in his dress, to-day he was unusually careful, making Jones array him in his last new morning suit. Going to the greenhouse, he cut a bud from a yellow rose and stuck it in his coat. But morning and then afternoon passed, and still his particular business was not attended to.

"Which way did Sir Harold and Miss Despencer go for their ride?" he asked, as he mounted his horse an hour or so before the dinner-hour.

"They went down the avenue, your lordship, towards Malton."

The sun's slanting rays lay full in his face as he rode, at a gentle canter, along the soft turf under the elms. At the end of the road he met Mabel, without Sir Harold, followed by her groom some thirty yards behind.

"I'm in for it now," he thought.

"Well, Marquis," said the young lady. They had been children and playfellows together for years.

"I was looking—that is—what an awfully jolly evening for a ride, Mabel."

"How far have you been?" she asked, patting her horse's neck, and checking him with her rein.

"Only just come out," he replied.

"What time is it?"

"Half-past five," he answered, looking at his watch.

"I thought it was later," she said. "We have been all round by Malton Downs."

"Let us go as far as the old oak at the top of the Chase before dinner," said the

young man. And, turning his horse, he cantered gently down the avenue by Mabel's side. After riding half a mile or so along the mossy turf, they reached the old oak.

"By Jove! Mabel—that is—what an awfully fine view there is from here."

"That was not what you were going to say, Malton."

"Wasn't it? I don't know I'm sure."

"Nonsense, you stupid boy. What is the matter with you to-day?"

"What jolly games and romps we've had under this old tree. Do you recollect that day that you and I and Charley got our feet wet, and were sent to bed for it?"

"Quite well, Malton."

"Mabel."

"Well, sir."

"I wish to—heaven you'd call me Fred. You used."

"What will you give me to call you 'Fred'—once only, mind," she said, archly.

"Dam—here goes—I'll do it now," said Malton to himself.

Then with his pale cheeks slightly flushed, and looking down steadily at the pommel of his saddle, he proceeded with the matter which was at that moment uppermost in his mind.

"Mabel, what I want to say—don't trifle—is—will you—now do not begin to laugh or I can't go on—will you be Mar-chionness—"

"I think not, sir," replied the maiden, colouring, and looking very lovely. "See, here comes Sir Harold. Pray, for my sake, try to look as if you had not been doing anything silly." And saying this she turned her horse to meet Sir Harold, who was coming gently down the bridle path.

POEMS BY THE LATE WILLIAM LEIGHTON.

A LITTLE volume of poems by the late William Leighton (Longmans) demands at least a passing notice at our hands. The author, a young man of great promise, died in the month of April last year, at the early age of twenty-eight. He was born at Dundee, in 1841; but, as his family subsequently moved to Liverpool, he received his education in that town, and was also placed in the office of a merchant there, engaged in trading with Brazil. Mr. William Leighton's very assiduous attention to the

duties of a commercial life naturally left him but little time for the cultivation of his literary tastes. But he appears to have devoted his whole leisure time to the Muses; and, when the circumstances under which he wrote such elegant and spirited verses are considered, it adds considerably to the merit of the young poet's performances. "Poetry," says the preface to the volume before us, "was his passion, and he was exceedingly well acquainted with the writings of the poets, among whom Shakspeare, Tennyson, and Longfellow were his favourite authors." The influence of the great Bard is very perceptible in Mr. Leighton's poems, while he may also have gained something of the delicacy that pervades his verses as a whole, from a careful perusal of the writings of the Poet Laureate. Some of his poems have appeared in the pages of this and other magazines, while others—touching upon passing events of national interest—appeared anonymously, from time to time, in the pages of the *Liverpool Mercury*.

Mr. Leighton was, unhappily, attacked by typhoid fever in a severe form, which, after an illness of only a few days, proved fatal. His last effort, "At Death's Door," breathing a very pure and noble sentiment, was written only a week before he was removed from the scene of his labours.

Mr. William Leighton was the nephew of Robert Leighton, whose poetical works are well known both in America and in England. The collection of poems before us comprises between seventy and eighty separate pieces, many of which are very beautiful, and nearly all are of an excellence above the average of magazine poetry. The space at our disposal will not permit us to make any long quotations from them, but incidentally we may mention "Rose," "Our Lost One," and "The Lovers: an Idyll of the War," as being among the best. From the former we will make a quotation, which may be taken as a fair specimen of Mr. Leighton's verses. "Rose" is a very touching poem. It is the lament of a loving heart—once young, now old—for the loss of a mistress, dead, long years ago. The old man stands on a spot commanding a view of the former abode of her whom he loved:—

"On the margin of the woodland, hidden half by leafy shadows,
There stands a little cottage, ivy-clad and rose-embowered."

The sight calls up in his mind the memory

of the happy past, while yet she trod the velvet sward at his side:—

"Ah, Rose! the rose blooms on your cheek, your
bright eyes gleam and glisten,
As standing 'mong the dewy flowers you carol
clear and wild;
What can an old man do but stand, and hold his
ear to listen,
Till all his heart is flooded, and his senses are
beguiled?"

The scenes of his youth rise again before him. He is an ardent lover by his mistress' side once more:—

"Again I seem the careless boy before whose raptur-
ed vision
The Future stretched in glittering and iris-
gloried gleams.

* * * * *

Again a soft hand seeks mine own, and in its
trustful clasping
I count a greater wealth than all the riches of a
throne!"

In fancy they visit together the scenes of their courtship:—

"Again we tread the forest paths, while curious
leaves are peering
To catch a glimpse of her sweet face ere light
and shadow part;
Hand locked in hand, we pass along in silent
bliss, each fearing
To break with spoken words upon the whisper-
ings of the heart."

He recollects his doubts and fears lest he was unworthy to call her his own, which is thus beautifully expressed:—

"'Mine own!' and yet I sometimes deemed the
thought a wild presumption—
Would plead my dull unworthiness, and press
her to forget—
Until a shower of sunny sparkles chased the mad
assumption
From wonder-widened eyes that shone 'neath
lashes long and wet!"

Then comes the sad story of her death, and the despair of her devoted lover, which is told in graphic language. After a time, the first great rush of sorrow over, calmer feelings fill the mourner's breast. He is reconciled to his lonely lot, waiting patiently until he shall be called to meet her in a better world. "And so each day at even-tide," he says—

"I wander by the forest-skirts, and feel her white
hands flinging
Sweet thoughts of comfort o'er my soul, to
soothe its lonely care;
While ever and anon there comes the fairy music
ringing,
In sweeps of passionate plaintiveness, upon the
eddy air!"

The story of "Rose" is not marked by any originality of incident or detail, but it is treated with considerable poetic feeling; and, in selecting it for the purpose of making an extract or two to show Mr. Leighton's style, we did so, not perhaps because we judged it to be the best poem in the volume before us, but because it displays, at least as well as any other, the writer's powers, imaginative and descriptive.

The tone of all the poems in the collection is thoughtful and earnest, and some of them breathe a spirit of deep and pure religious devotion. They are, however, to be looked at rather as indications of what their author promised—had he been spared—to perform in the maturity of his powers. Although many of the poems were written at an early age, and none perhaps are to be considered as the productions of a fancy and judgment yet fully developed, the little volume will be perused with pleasure, saddened somewhat, however, by feelings of regret at the untimely death of the young author.

THE KNIGHT'S LAMENT.

UPON the dreary battle-field
I lay across my shattered shield.
Through all the dark, cold night I lay,
And then through half the sunny day.
The blood-red grasses to and fro,
Waved over friend and over foe—
Waved o'er my anguished face, when, lo !
They woke me, waving to and fro.

Then gazed I, very wearily,
Up to the blue and happy sky ;
While all across each tear-dimmed cheek
The hot sun shone, and made me weak :
While far, and far, and far away,
I looked across the shining bay ;
And O ! thy father's castle lay,
So far, and far, and far away.

Now, all above, and all below,
The air was cool—soft winds did blow—
When suddenly along the plain
Arose a cloud all big with rain.
And then, O Christ, I thank thee well !
The heavy rain-drops fell, and fell,
Into a deep and strange sea-shell :
I crept and drank at this strange well.

And then, because the brave horse neighed,
I clung to him, and, half afraid,
He bent his head, his bloodshot eyes
Looked into mine with strange surprise ;
And leaning on my broken spear,
And creeping near, and near, and near,
I mounted him in very fear,
Armed only with a broken spear.

Right in the middle of the way,
Where all the ghastly faces lay,
A vulture sat, all red with gore,
Tearing a heart that beat no more.
Red were its talons, bright its eyes,
Outstretching wings, of wondrous size,
Across the path lay counterwise.
I shrieked : we fled from those strange eyes.

We reached the sea : winds from the sea
Blew o'er the sea and came to me ;
And all along the wandering waves,
Soft music came from pearly caves ;
And far, and far, and far away,
Along the bay, the morning grey
Broke softly, where the soft sand lay.
I wept for joy, and turned away.

We went to where a cool greenwood,
Embowered in fragrant solitude,
Lay round about on every hand—
A pleasant, sunny, fairy land.
Beneath the bloom of bending trees,
Onward we went, and joy and ease,
And gentle sights and sounds to please,
Lay nestled in the bending trees.

And ever as we went, a bird,
Singing above in gladness, stirred
The branches, hung with green and white,
With a most sweet and strange delight ;
And all the sunshine and the shade,
Fantastic strangeness ever made—
As shadow with fair sunshine played,
And then sunshine with pensive shade.

Thus, through the quiet woods, all day
We went upon our homeward way ;
Until, into the pensive shade,
I saw the gentle sunshine fade.
Then all beneath the mellow moon
I lay, and heard the fen-fowl's croon,
And heard the river's mournful tune,
Floating beneath the mellow moon.

I had a vision in the night ;
Nor was it one of rare delight,
Nor such as youthful poets deem
They see when'er they dream a dream ;
For then I saw, or seemed to see,
A pale, white phantom, like to thee,
Which stood and smiled and beckoned me :
And more than this I might not see.

But when I woke the morrow morn,
Just as the sun was newly born,
The vision was so ill-defined,
It seemed some phantom of the mind.
Then on we went, and came again
Unto the wild and open plain,
Where I might hear the surging main,
And see thy far-off home again.

When this I saw, the hot blood ran
Around my heart ; yet weak and wan,
I leaned across my weary horse.
Then, hastening on our homeward course,
We soon came near, and near, and near,
To those I held so dear, so dear.
" O, chaffering swallow, say I am here !"
I cried—" That I am near, am near."

Full many a mile the meadows lay,
Soft cradled in the bloom of May;
From flowery haunts the lark upsprang,
And o'er the tender meadows sang.
All at the right and left were seen
Sweet smelling trees and grasses green;
And, through the boughs that waved between,
The shining houses, too, were seen.

Between the boughs I wandered down
The pathway, to the little town;
And all who knew me came to see,
And welcomed me, and pitied me.
Fair maidens, spinning in the shade,
Pausing, looked up, and half afraid,
Sang ancient songs of knight and maid,
And tender vows breathed in the shade.

Thy father met me at his gate;
Thy mother sang, "So late! so late!
And those I love so far from me,
And I alone in misery!"
He led me through the silent hall,
"So late! so late! the shadows fall
Wearily o'er the castle wall:"
The song went through the silent hall.

Then in the dim, mysterious eve,
I heard the cooing ringdoves grieve,
The nightingales sang soft and low,
The fountain droned and splashed below;
All in the fields around there went
Strange winds that sighed with discontent;
Through half-closed lattices the scent
Of many roses came and went.

A chamber door, half open; there
Floated the sad and fragrant air—
Soft sounds and fancies intertwined
With coming joys, all undefined.
We paused, and looked within. We heard
No sound of feet, nor whispered word—
Only a little breeze, which stirred
Long curls of golden hair, we heard.

My heart was weak, my eyes were dim.
He held me close—I rushed from him.
I tore the silken screen apart—
My heart throbbed!—O, my throbbing heart!
I bent near thee, I looked at thee,
I kissed thee, whispering lovingly,
"Awake! awake! and answer me!"
I paused, and closely clung to thee.

Weeping and weeping near to me,
And weeping, weeping bitterly,
All in the strange and troubled gloom,
A little crowd stood in the room.
A wondrous paleness smote each face,
A wondrous silence filled the place.
I clung to thee. Christ, give me grace!
Close to thy face I hid my face.

Half doubting—in a dream of bliss—
I heard my lips thy cold lips kiss.
Entranced by this most strange distress,
I gazed on thy strange loveliness.
Pale lips, cold cheeks, and loveless eyes,
Gave back no welcome, nor surprise,
Nor smiles, nor tears, nor dear replies.
O, lily lips! O, loveless eyes!

How long half dreaming thus I lay
I cannot know, for none will say;
But this I know, that never more
I walk with thee along the shore.
And this I know, that morn and eve,
And through the night, the ring-doves grieve;
And sad thoughts all around me weave
A weary veil from morn till eve.

Long after, lying wearily,
A little bird sang unto me.
It seemed as if thy spirit stirred
Within the bosom of the bird.
So saintly sweet the bird did sing,
I said, "This is a heavenly thing—
A gladsome angel carolling."
And near and far the bird did sing.

As thus I lay, with wakeful eyes,
I heard delicious melodies,
Like fairies in the forest hear
When summer glories crown the year:
Was never yet a bird did sing
So sweet and clear as this strange thing.
Entranced, I rose, and, wandering,
Walked in the wood where it did sing.

The grieving stars kissed, one by one,
The footprints of the dying sun,
As in the middle of the wood
In trembling wonderment I stood.
O, was it then a sweet moonrise
That fluttered o'er my tearful eyes?
Or was it some most strange surprise—
A mystic moon's mysterious rise?

O, Jesu, Jesu, give me grace!
Hot kisses fell upon my face,
And passionate lips were close to mine,
And loving arms did me entwine.
Two dear blue eyes—so wondrous bright—
Shone through the softness of the night;
My heart upheaped with rare delight:
Save thine, no eyes e'er shone so bright.

A tender voice did speak and say,
"My thoughts are with thee through the day,
And ever through the changeful night
My soul shall be thy beaten-light.
No more, no more, remember me!"
I shrieked!—I strained my eyes to see:
Upon the wind ran mockingly—
"No more, no more, remember me!"

How long within the wood I lay,
I cannot know, for none will say.
I woke: the land was glad with songs,
Sung by the happy harvest throngs.
Amazed, I rose and left the place—
Amazed, they looked me in the face—
My former self they scarce could trace:
I wept, and left that wondrous place.

TABLE TALK.

PENALTIES ARE PAID by greatness, notoriety, and rank, which mediocrity happily escapes. In "Table Talk" (No. 109), we noticed the use made by a speculative builder of the removal of

the Laureate's household, for the sake of greater privacy, from the Isle of Wight to Haslemere. It is easily to be understood that certain ones among us would very much like to occupy a neat and commodious villa residence, at a moderate rental, from the windows of which, with a glass, the certain ones could see what was going on in their illustrious neighbour's back garden. Think of the pride and pleasure of inviting friends to "country air and a sight of Mr. Tennyson." But who, one would think, would care particularly to occupy chambers hallowed by their association with the Right Reverend Dr. Mackarness? or—unless, indeed, a sickly sheep—who would be remarkably anxious to live in the same locality, and breathe the self-same air, with Dr. Erasmus Wilson—going because he had gone? Yet we might reasonably infer, from two advertisements which appear in the same copy of the *Times*, March 31, 1870—that health and life attend the footsteps of the one, and that some lingering odour of sweet sanctity still hangs about the old abode of the other. This is one:—

"Chambers to be Let in Pall Mall, looking into St. James's-square, lately occupied by the Lord Bishop of Oxford.—Apply," &c.

And this is the other:—

"MARGATE.—To be Let, — Cottage, overlooking the sea; just finished to order, but never occupied, on account of domestic bereavement. Three-quarters of an acre well-stocked garden, croquet lawn, paddock, &c. Erasmus Wilson just bought house on the estate."

AN ANECDOTE OF GARRICK and Dr. Hill—doubtfully called Sir John Hill, in virtue of a foreign title—is very well known. It is to the effect that the physician induced the manager to bring out and play himself the leading character in a farce of his, entitled the "Rout," which was hissed off the stage on the first night of its performance. The doctor blamed Garrick's acting, and Garrick found fault with Hill's wit, or the lack of it. When, Sir John having written some abusive libels about him, Garrick is said to have replied in the couplet:—

"For physic and farces, his equal there scarce is;
His farces are physic, his physic a farce is."

And so settled his adversary finally. Here is a very similar—and, I think, less known—passage of arms between Sir Godfrey Kneller and Dr. Ratcliffe. Sir Godfrey and Rat-

cliffe lived next door to one another in Bow-street, Covent-garden. The painter was very fond of horticultural pursuits, and the physician had a similar taste. Sir Godfrey, who had a fine flower-garden, at Dr. Ratcliffe's request allowed him the privilege of a door in the party-wall, so that he might enter it whenever he chose. A squabble having arisen between them, owing to the liberties taken by Ratcliffe's servants, Sir Godfrey at last was obliged to send word to his neighbour that he should proceed to brick up the doorway. Ratcliffe cynically observed, "Let him do what he will to the door except *painting* it." To which the painter retorted: "Did my cood friend say so? You go back, and tell him from me I will take *anything* from *him* but *physic*."

DO OUR RITUALISTS eat hot cross-buns on Good Friday? Perhaps they do not, but consider the consumption of such cakes to be a weak concession to the childish appetites of those who would not duly observe their Lenten fastings; and who, had they lived in the days of George the Third, would have been among the crowds who clustered beneath the wooden porticoes of the two "royal," and rival, bun-houses at Chelsea. But there is the cross-mark on the surface of the bun to commend it to minds which are favourably disposed to symbolism; and there is the history of the cross-bun itself, which goes back to the time of Cecrops, and to the *liba* offered to Astarte, and to the Jewish passover cakes, and to the eucharistic bread, or cross-marked wafers, mentioned in St. Chrysostom's Liturgy, and thence adopted by the early Christians. So that the Good Friday bun has antiquity and tradition to recommend it; and, indeed, its very name of *bun* is but the oblique *boun*, from *bous*, the sacred ox, the semblance of whose horns was stamped upon the cake. There, too, they also did duty for the horns of Astarte, in which word some philologists would affect to trace a connection with Easter. The substitution by the Greeks of the cross-mark in place of the horn-mark would seem to have chiefly been for the easier division of the round bun into four equal parts. Such cross-marked buns were found at Herculaneum.

IN THE LAST WEEK OF MARCH there was sold in London, by Messrs. Sotheby & Co.,

the library of an eminent collector, in which single volumes fetched prices as high as £120. The sale included a copy of the Bible *en Francoys, par J. Lefevre d'Estaples*, which was sold for £8. In this copy of the Holy Scriptures, the word which, in our English version—in reference to the fig-leaf covering of Adam and Eve—is translated “aprons,” is rendered “*braies*,” the word from which the Scotch took their “breeks,” and the English their “breeches.” Thus this French version anticipated that version of the Bible first printed in Geneva in 1562 (folio), and commonly called “the Breeches Bible,” from its rendering of Genesis iii., 7, by the word “breeches” instead of “aprons.” It was the work of certain reformers who had fled to Geneva in the reign of Queen Mary. The names of Miles Coverdale, John Knox, and many others are given as joint translators; but Mr. Anderson, in his “History of the English Bible,” has shown good reason for limiting the number of translators to three—W. Whittingham, Anthony Gilby, and Thomas Sampson. It proved to be the most popular edition of the Scriptures during the reign of Elizabeth, and, within fifty years, no less than 130 editions of “the Breeches Bible” had been issued, each edition, it is conjectured, consisting of 1,000 copies. This fact may tend to correct a very erroneous impression of the value of a “Breeches Bible.” As much as £100 has been asked for a copy; and it was only last year that the owner of a copy largely advertised his willingness to part with it on the receipt of £40. I have known one of the later copies sold for 14s.; and two or three pounds ought to buy one of the earliest copies. It may be noted that the word “breeches” is not peculiar to the Geneva version, for Wickliffe’s translation contains the rendering, “and maden hem breeches;” and he had been anticipated in this by Ælfric’s Saxon version, which has—“and sewed fig-leaves, and worked them weed-breech or cloaths for the breech.” And even the French version, above quoted, had also been anticipated in the manuscript French translation of Petrus Comestor’s “Commentary on the Bible,” made by Guiars des Moulins, in the thirteenth century, where is the translation—“Couvertures tout auresint comme unnes petites *braies*.” The Latin version of Francis Junius and Immanuel Tremellius, 1585, has also been called “the Latin Breeches Bible,” from its rendering—

“*Consutisque foliis ficus fecerunt sibi subligacula.*” But the last word (which is used by Cicero) might be translated “aprons,” just as readily as “drawers” or “breeches.”

THERE ARE SOME HOMELY LINES, descriptive of the old and new styles of farmers and their families, which are often quoted, but with considerable variations. Perhaps their original form may be the following, which I have met with in a work on agriculture, published in 1803:—

“Hand to the plough;
Wife to the cow;
Boy to the mow;
Will pay the rent now.
But man with his tally-ho!
Wife’s squalling piano;
Girl with her satin, oh!
Boy with his Latin, oh!

Is splash, dash, and must end in ruin oh!”

The author of these lines would have been no friend to the middle-class schools for the education of farmers’ sons. I may observe that the word “mow” is still pronounced by many agricultural labourers so as to be a rhyme to “now.”

A CORRESPONDENT: A very amusing anecdote came under my notice a short time ago, which I will relate for the benefit of your readers. The vicar of a little village in Lincolnshire, being desirous of having a choir in his church, called together a few of the villagers, among whom was a general-dealer—a very important self-sufficient individual, notorious for his long-winded political arguments. The party met, and all went off with *éclat*. One evening the piece selected was “Luther’s Hymn.” When it was concluded, the vicar remarked that it was a curious thing that the author of it had never been discovered; whereupon the person mentioned before remarked that “*he knew* who was the author, and could show it in black and white,” &c. The matter passed over; and a few days after, the clergyman happening to be in his shop, and remembering what he had said, reminded him of his promise. Mr. — fetched the book, and turning, with a triumphant smile, to the hymn, pointed to the word “Anon.” in the corner, remarking that he knew “*Mr. Anon* to be the composer of a great many very capital pieces.”

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OR,

MEMOIRS OF A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY.

BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

CHAPTER VI.



IN the morning, what he thought persecution began. His father called him into the study—where, indeed, actual meetings of the *Vehmgericht* seemed to be held.

"See here, Charles," Mr. Benbow said, taking out his

cheque-book ; "we must spare no money on this expedition of yours. Take your man with you. I shall write to Pitt in London to send you down three of his best hunters—Lady Rosa admires good horsemanship. In fact, draw on me for what you like, and fill these two cheques for whatever is necessary. It is false economy, sparing anything on the last *coup*."

"But they are not going to-morrow, sir," he pleaded ; "we could get them to remain longer—such a short visit."

"I wish we could," said the other, abstractedly. "Somehow, I fear you won't do much away from me. The Duke has business, I fear. But try yourself with her. Still, it would only make the difference of a day or two."

"But must I go now, sir? Is it not too sudden? I have nothing ready. I don't see how it's to be done."

"But, my dear boy, you—a young fellow—don't want preparation—"

Encouraged by the good-natured tone, Charles came up to his father.

"You won't ask me to go—at all. You are always so kind. I shall make a botch of it, I know, and—"

"SIR!"

There was a pause. The young man shrank away.

The father observed the effect, then said, quickly—

"You go in the morning. Send into the town and get what you want; and see, don't forget my warning of last night. And see, again: let me hear that all is settled finally within a fortnight. Go, sir."

Under this menace there was still a gleam of comfort, which Mr. Benbow did not know he was imparting—the expedition into Dipchester. There was a chance there, an age, a reprieve; though the execution might come to-morrow morning—execution, alas! from which there was no escaping.

So, after the usual spell of duty at lunch, and talking and attendance, he eagerly told Lady Rosa he must go and get "things"—to be ready to set out with them in the morning, but would be back by dinner.

He had all but reassured that young lady, and this eagerness for departure helped to fortify the impression.

He ran to his room to decorate himself, then rushed to the stable for his horse, and in a moment was galloping on to Dipchester.

Dipchester has its half-dozen show-houses of the old framed-house pattern, which hang over the pathway, with shops below, and little cottage-like windows. McCallum the draper's was one of these, and over McCallum's the new actress had lodgings. In such a place there is always repugnance to

such a calling, attended with a holy horror. But Mr. McCallum had neat millinery young ladies—nice and pretty; and these soon made a party in favour of the beautiful lady up-stairs; who had none of the forward ways of the profession, but was interesting, and polite, and ladylike, and asked up the Janes and Fannys to look at her dress when she was going out to do Pauline. McCallum, a stern Scot, could not resist this popular feeling, and soon came round to her, and also to the steady respectable sheep-dog who guarded her, and who had teeth to bite, and who *would* bite if necessary. Miss Grant, and very soon Mr. McCallum, wife, family, and children, were seen in the boxes applauding with delight—which was wonderful, considering the admission tickets were “orders.”

When he rode up to the door of the draper's shop and asked for Miss Effingham, great interest was exhibited among the young ladies of that house—to whom, indeed, he was known, having often purchased gloves, &c., there, by which patronage he conferred an honour. Miss Effingham was out; but one of the young ladies, who admired the gallant youth secretly, told him that the actress had gone for a walk across the fields, and had taken her part with her. The direction was described to him, and, after some hesitation, he set out and followed.

About Ditchester were all sorts of pleasant lanes and turnings—short cuts with stiles—that ran past plantations, and were really inviting. He was fond of the country; but on this day it seemed to him more inviting than ever it did—in fact, it was *her* empire and dominion.

He had left his horse at the inn and wandered on, with a secret conviction—it seemed inspiration—that he would overtake her. Very soon he did: at least he saw a lady coming along swiftly, and attended, it would seem, by a gentleman—an apparition that made his cheeks flush, and the blood rush back to his heart. Who could this man be? He stopped to watch, and then noticed that she was in front, walking very fast, and that there was some sort of dramatic action going on. Impelled by a sort of fate, he hurried to meet her; and then she said, tremulously, “Oh, Mr. Benbow, I am so glad—*you* will protect me!”

He saw it was Mr. Hunter, the manufacturer—who was much discomposed at his arrival.

“Protect you,” said the young man; “who has dared—has this fellow—”

“Oh, come, I say, none of that,” said Mr. Hunter. “It's all very fine! There are lots of actresses who come here, and are only too glad to get any notice.”

“You had better go away,” said Charles; “you are not wanted here; and for the future, too, if anything of this sort takes place, you'll bring about something very unpleasant.”

“Oh! what will you do?” said the other, in a fury. “Do you mean to threaten me? Who are you, I'd like to know, that give directions to me?”

“Never mind that,” said the young man. “I only warn you; and, as I stand here, if you dare to annoy this young lady again with this persecution, I'll give you a sound thrashing! There.”

Never did Miss Effingham seem so lovely to him. She was excited; and there was a charming flush in her cheeks from the excitement. He was “her preserver”—that new character the acting of which, though lasting but a few moments, is equal to an attachment of years.

“What are you threatening me for?” said Mr. Hunter, in an insolent way. “What are you talking about thrashing, and that sort of thing? Miss Effingham didn't ask you to be her policeman and bully, did she? How dare you talk of thrashing, and that sort of thing, to me?”

“You had better give over all this, and go your own way, and let us go ours.”

“I sha'n't. Who are you and your lot up there? You're all *gentlemen*, I suppose. We've put up with too much—far too much of all your airs—from you and your set up there. I can tell you they're all sick of it about here, and it won't be stood much longer. There are better men about who could buy and sell every one of you and them.”

“No doubt,” said the other. “But this is quite another question. But I tell you distinctly, your buying and selling notions won't do in this case. So, for the future, take warning.”

“I entreat you, Mr. Benbow,” she said, in the sweetest tones, “to let the matter be. This person, I am sure, will not trouble me any more.”

“He had better not,” said the young man, excitedly.

“Do you suppose I'll put up with this?”

said Mr. Hunter, quite furious at this contempt. "The road is open to me, and I'll walk on it; and I sha'n't go away at your bidding, nor at anyone else's. This lady don't want you either. What damned work it is!" And, putting his arms a-kimbo, he planted himself on the other side of Miss Effingham.

In a moment he was on his back in a convenient ditch. The young man was a skilful boxer. They were walking on; and, before he could struggle out, were on the high road.

Charles was now indeed her protector and champion. How happy—how triumphant the feeling! There was a tie to unite them. He was quite agitated at the thought. She was grateful, profusely grateful. It was such a happy walk home. He trod upon air all the time, walking side by side with his enchantress.

"How fortunate I am," he said, over and over again. "This is the luckiest day. How fortunate that I came on to-day instead of yesterday. Something really impelled me. It looks like a providence that I should have been sent to save you from that fellow."

"Indeed, I want a protector. If you only knew the persecution I have to endure from that man. He tries to get into the house. He pursues me at the theatre. I cannot endure it."

"It will be different now," he said, eagerly. "I shall take care he never troubles you any more. If he dare to—"

He stopped. He suddenly recollected that he could not remain, and must go to-morrow.

"Oh, what shall I do!" he exclaimed. "I have to go from this. You must be left here unprotected. Oh, it cannot be—it must not be!"

He then told her how his father required him to go on this visit. Forced him, in fact. He had done everything in his power. He would give the world to stay. She listened eagerly.

"It cannot be helped," she said; "I must only bear my lot—the actress's lot. We have no privilege, no protection, once we exhibit ourselves on the public stage. That takes us out of the rank of ladies. Yet I was born and brought up a lady! No, I must only bear my lot like the rest. This man will, of course, continue his persecution—nay, will revenge himself on me for what

you have made him suffer. But I must bear it."

They were now at her house. The young man was in a strange state of doubt and distress. He knew not what to do for this noble creature, brought to such distress. And a lady, too! How delighted he was to hear that news. He could fling it in the teeth of those who slandered her. For her he could be well content—and proud, too—to brave them all.

"So your father wishes you to go," she said, as they entered. "Has he any special reason?"

"Oh, of course he has some plans—some miserable plans that I am to carry out—a wretched mercenary marriage: to sell myself, in short, to buy rank and influence."

"And why should you not do this?" she said, calmly; "it is a prudent thing, and what we are all taught to do."

"Pauline would not say that," he said, bitterly; "but that is only in a play, of course. You do not care one way or the other. I suppose you have so much indulged in these imitative emotions that you have grown tired of all sentiment."

They were now in the little modest apartments over McCallum's. There he found seated the elderly lady who seemed to be eternally knitting—Miss Grant, her aunt—and who, it was known, always attended her like a mother. It was a very happy evening for him. Tea was poured out for him by those enchanted fingers; and, gradually, she gave him scraps and hints of her history—how she had been, as it were, forced on to the stage; her father had died and left them all in distress; and then she had felt it her duty to turn her talents to some profit. Thank God, she had helped them a great deal; her poor talents had brought in something—at least, more than the miserable alms a governess receives.

"Going on the stage! Mr. Benbow," she went on, like an inspired Corinna; "I know what is thought of that. What eyelids are raised! What shoulders shrugged! It is a noble profession, if you have genius and brilliancy, and feel that you can move the crowd. Oh! what I pine for is the great audience, the grand theatre, the thousand and one faces all turned towards the amphitheatre of intelligence, converging, like rays, to *you* as the centre; the playing upon that vast and noble instrument; the extracting of the faintest and most delicate tones, up to a

crash loud as that of an organ; the making them thrill and flutter; then the turning them wild and delirious all at once, as if you were touching keys—what is there on earth approaching this? From a child this dream has always been before me. London! London! Shall it ever be realised?"

He looked at her with admiration. She seemed inspired.

"Whatever I can do—" he said, eagerly. "We have friends—influential friends—in town—that is," he added, hesitating, "my father has."

"Ah, I know," she said, gently. "I understand all that. He wishes you to get on—is ambitious. Even if he knew that at this moment you were wasting your time with a poor actress, instead of waiting on the great lady who *despises* me, who feels more contempt for me than she would for her maid—yet I am a lady, too, as I would prove to you; and my poor murdered father was a gentleman."

He started. "Murdered!"

"Not with knife or poison. There are other ways of murdering just as villainous. Never mind. Well, you are going on this visit, and you will know other actresses, and be as rapturous over them."

"No, never," he said. "I am not a child that they can send to school and order about. No, I must wait *now*; for that fellow would say I fled from him. You must have someone to protect you, and it would be my glory to do so. Yes, I shall remain."

"What! and bring you into a quarrel with your father! Never! At least, not for me. I shall never see you again if you do. No one shall suffer for me."

"You cannot hinder it. Where you are, Miss Effingham, I shall be."

"Then you will drive me out of this place. I shall bring no one into trouble. I have enough trouble of my own on my head. No, you must go. *Why should you stay?*"

"Because I love—I adore you!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE companion had left the room a little time before. She was not to hear this passionate declaration.

The actress started; then an expression of exquisite and tender sympathy—so it seemed to the adorer—came into her face: a sort of pity.

"What is this? what do you mean, my

poor boy? Do you know what you are saying, or going to do?"

"I am prepared for anything," he said. "I would face them all—face the world!"

"Marry an actress! You! They would think you would disgrace them."

"Marry a lady—a peerless lady—fit to place beside queens! I shall not rise till you consent."

"It would be the most cruel folly in the world did I do so. You do not know—you cannot see the difficulties. It is hopeless. You would only be sorry for it later."

"Never—never! I am yours—yours always, till death. If you do not consent, I shall go back, and before them all renounce all their plans publicly—then my father will turn me out of doors, and I shall be ruined: to be ruined without you!"

She paused, and thought a moment. A curious look of triumph came into her eyes. It disturbed him.

"I am thinking," she said, in answer to his look, "what a glorious compliment this love of yours is to me. It is worth the applause of that great house which is my dream. It is the first gleam of sunshine I have had for years. I am proud of it. Indeed I am. After all, why should I punish you, or make you wretched. There is a fate in these things; and—let me confess this much to you—I *do* like you. Stay! But—but—this is all too hurried. I must make conditions."

He was in a rapture—in a tumult of gratitude. But she stopped him.

"Listen, and sit down calmly beside me while I speak. Think of me, if you like, as Pauline, and of yourself as Claude."

"As your Claude."

"Hush! Now, you must wait, and promise me to wait patiently. Indeed, I am serious in this—I must protect you. And, if you are advised by me, and are patient, I may promise that, after a time—"

He would agree to anything if only *she* promised.

"You must stay here."

"That is fixed as fate. Only help me. Your surpassing cleverness will show me how."

"There is only one way that I see. Go to the Duke; tell him you have had a quarrel with this man; and that, as a gentleman, he will see how strange it would look your flying away. It seems a subterfuge; but I think of your interest."

It was an inspiration. It would have been years before he could have thought of it.

"It will not be much gain," she went on; "but still it will give you three or four days, since that is what you desire. Meantime, you will think all this over. *Both* of us shall think it over, and you may repent of what you have said to me."

"Oh, but you will promise now. I rely on it—it is the only thing that will keep me up. You will not go back of your word?"

"I never go back of anything," she said. "But you must wait: indeed, yes! I know more of the world than you—even the stage world has taught me something. We learn something from plays; for those who wrote them knew the world very well. This is all too sudden—far too sudden, my dear Mr. Charles; and, for my own sake as well as yours, I make conditions. How can I tell that I could like you?"

"Oh! Miss Effingham," he exclaimed, in despair, "do you wish to crush me altogether?"

"We have only seen each other twice, recollect that. You would despise me if I was won in a moment—brought to your wrist by a single invitation, as if I was a hawk. Hawk, yes! I know who would call me that. No, I should like to learn to like you, and to teach you to learn to like me. Violent and sudden appetites never last. At the same time, I own that I like you; and will not deny that it is nearly certain that I shall come to love you."

What more could he desire? It was eminently complimentary. He was being dealt with as a man.

"Now," she went on, "let us talk of something else. Will you come and see Mrs. Haller to-morrow night. No, I had forgotten—you are ordered away."

"Yes," he said, pettishly. "Oh, but I must stay."

"No, you must not—I cannot allow it. Recollect you take orders from me. You envied the Claude of the other night—that terrible Hulkes; well, do you know who is to be my Stranger?—Mr. Haggerston!"

The young man almost groaned. "Awful!" he cried.

"How can I play with such people. It is enough to chill all the poetry, the animation, the dramatic feeling in my heart of hearts. That vulgarian will vulgarize *me*. Oh, that I had someone of gentle blood,

someone of refinement—then you would see me act, indeed."

"I should not like to see that," he cried, eagerly; "and yet I suppose it will come to it one of these days. Up in London there are such noble, handsome actors: I could not wish to see you with them, unless—O, I wish I could play with you!"

"I do, indeed, wish you could; and you could do it, even this very night. Proficiency, even without training, would make itself felt. If you acted as you did to-day, as you have always acted during the time I have known you—not very long—you would win a reputation."

"I would give the world," he said, "to have that privilege. If you would teach me—"

"What are we talking of?" she said, smiling. "Bringing young Mr. Benbow on the stage—that would be news. We are indeed planning out a new life."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN young Mr. Benbow returned, he found the Duke in the library, reading the *Times*; and, in a few minutes, had taken him into confidence. The young man's love had given him, of a sudden, tact, earnestness, and a sort of winning persuasiveness. The great man listened with interest.

"A young girl of the place—and who is she?"

Charles adroitly turned this inquiry aside by loud denunciation of the vulgarity, the coarseness of "that Hunter;" in which the other agreed.

"Oh, certainly, I see it," he said; "if you left with us, at once, it would be said that you showed the white feather. Oh, no; it would not do at all. Not that I think the low rascal will take any notice—he has had enough."

"But my father, Duke," said the young man, "he must not know; and yet how are we to account for my not setting off with you? There is the difficulty."

"Leave that to me," said the other; "it will only make a difference of a day or two, and we shall spare you for that time."

In a short time Mr. Benbow came in. The great man took him aside. The Benbow forehead grew wrinkled and disturbed. What did this mean?

"We won't have him for a day or two yet," said the Duke; "we may have to stop

in town, and he can then follow us on. I have settled it all with Rosa."

"Ah, yes!" said Mr. Benbow, eagerly, as if that arrangement was after his own heart; "nothing could be better; we can send him to you then." But grave suspicion and trouble began to fill his soul. This "fellow" had been at some of his tricks. He must see to it.

The young man was in overpowering spirits. He was flying about "on air." He was so happy. He had succeeded; and she—so wonderful, clever, brilliant—had directed him. It was like an inspiration. But his father had him by the arm.

"I want you, Charles. What is the meaning of this?"

"I thought, sir, the Duke told you."

"Where were you after lunch?"

"Out riding, sir."

"By yourself?"

"Yes, sir. I went into Dipchester to buy things for the journey, as you agreed I was to do, sir. Really, I don't understand—I do all you say."

Again this was her inspiration. She was teaching him, he felt, many things.

His father thought a moment. Then said, "No doubt; I dare say you may be right. But I hope, Charles, you will bear my words in mind, *for your own sake*."

It was now about five o'clock. The sound of wheels was heard outside, and a servant came to say that Dr. Fearon, the Dipchester doctor, whose visits were very frequent when there was company at the Castle—liking to make connection, under the mask of professional attendance—was come. Mr. Benbow was impatient when he heard that the Doctor wished to see him.

"What does the man want? Tell him there is nobody sick in the house."

The servant was going with this communication, when he was called back.

"I suppose I must see him."

Young Mr. Charles had hurried away to his duties, and was very *empressé* in attention to the fair object who was laid out for him.

He had a sort of fiction for himself that she was deputy, or in the place of the other. It was to her, the absent one, he seemed to be paying all these attentions. He was full of spirits and vivacity, and seemed to be really making way with that cold, haughty dame. Love was furnishing him out with spirit, energy, wit, or goodwill, which makes

up for much that is wanting. Nothing could be better than the way everything was going off.

As he was dressing for dinner, the door was opened suddenly, and his father entered, his face contorted with anger.

"What is this?" he said at once. "How dare you attempt to tell me falsehoods. I have heard the whole thing. It is over the place, this low adventure. How dare you attempt to deceive me with your *lies*?"

"Lies, father—that is a very strong word." She was giving him courage.

"Yes, lies. I see your low, contemptible game; and it has shocked me, and made me ashamed. I tell you this solemnly, sir, on this spot—you shall pack off to-morrow with them!"

"My dear father, you mistake the whole thing. The Duke knows all."

"Knows all! Another falsehood."

"Yes, all: I told him everything. I saw Miss Effingham coming across the fields, and this man pursuing her—persecuting her with his low attentions; and I did what any gentleman would have done—what you *must* have done yourself, father—gone up and protected her, and thrashed the fellow. The Duke says I would be showing the white feather and disgracing us all if I went off in the morning."

This was such a new strain for his son—the argument was so well put, and so forcible and reasonable in its tone—that the father was pleased in spite of himself. Love, wonderful love!—rhetorician as well!

"I can only give you my old caution, Charles," he said. "Make what pretenses and ingenious excuses you like—indulge yourself in what fancies you please; but this matter must go on. Now, come down to dinner."

TUFTS AND TUFT-HUNTERS.

THE two words "tufts" and "tuft-hunters" have long since been incorporated in the English language, even apart from their more limited and local usage as specimens of genuine university slang; but it seems—at any rate, at Christ Church, Oxford—that tufts are to be abolished; not that such a step would necessarily put a stop to tuft-hunting. The latter can still maintain a vigorous existence, although the gold tassel in the nobleman's cap may be transformed to the customary black of ordinary

undergraduates. What said Thomas Haynes Bayley, in his ballad, "The Man with a Tuft?"—

"I ever at college
From commoners shrank,
Still craving the knowledge
Of people of rank.
In my glass my lord's ticket
I eagerly stuffed;
And all called me 'Riquet,'
The man with the tuft.
My patron! Most noble!
Of highest degree!
Thou never can'st probe all
My homage for thee!
Thy hand—oh! I'd lick it,
Though often rebuff'd;
And still I am 'Riquet,'
The man with the tuft!" &c.

There is an earlier satire on the same subject, in a very clever *jeu d'esprit*, published in 1834, in six parts (of from twenty-four to thirty-six pages each), entitled "Black Gowns and Red Coats; or, Oxford in 1834"—copies of which are now rarely to be met with. In Part III. are these lines:—

"There, stripling peers, whose noble blood disdains
The mud that stagnates in plebeian veins
See servile tutors fearful to dispraise,
And dare a broader latitude of ways;
Teach awe-struck scouts with wonder to behold
The cap surmounted with the threads of gold;
Dine at the dais in a Sefton's style,
And know their Alma Mater by her smile.
Around such suns, fit planets in their train,
The spawn of merchant monarchs of Mark-lane,
Scorning their vulgar sires, whose pen-worn ears
Ne'er heard such music from the lips of peers,
Echo each phrase, in smiles and flattery drest,
And with forced laugh applaud the ribald jest.
The peer is poor—no matter, they can lend—
Such cost were small to call his lordship friend;
Their bows are slighted and their hand rebuff'd—
N'importe—such jokes are witty in a tuft."

A foot-note to the last word explains that "tuft is a word in the Oxford vocabulary, though not in the 'Slang Dictionary.'" It has, however, now obtained a place in Mr. Hotten's "Slang Dictionary" (2nd ed., 1864, p. 262), and also in Mr. B. H. Hall's "Collection of College Words and Customs," who quotes from Halliwell this meaning of the word tuft-hunter:—"A cant term in the English universities for a hanger-on to noblemen and persons of quality. So called from the tuft in the cap of the latter." "There are few such thorough tuft-hunters as your genuine Oxford don" ("Blackwood's Magazine," vol. lvi., p. 572). Mr. Hall's voluminous work, from page 465 of which this quotation is taken, was published at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in a revised and en-

larged edition, in 1856. In 1852 had appeared, in New York, another work by an American writer on English college life. This was Mr. Charles Astor Bristed's "Five Years in an English University"—the university being Cambridge, where Mr. Bristed was a Fellow-commoner and Foundation Scholar of Trinity College. The Fellow-commoners, he says, "in consideration of their paying twice as much for everything as anybody else, are allowed the privilege of sitting at the Fellows' table in Hall, and in their seats at chapel; of wearing a gown with gold or silver lace, and a velvet cap with a metallic tassel" (p. 13).

Another American member of the same college and university has since published his impressions and views, under the title of "On the Cam. By William Everett" (1866).

At page 7 he mentions Mr. Bristed's work as being the only one which gives a "good account of an English university;" and that, in all other works by Englishmen on "English universities, scarcely anything has been written from which an American can derive correct ideas of them." The Americans, therefore, lie under deep obligations to Messrs. Everett and Bristow, and should reprint the work of the latter, which has long been out of print and very scarce; "its plates were, most unfortunately, destroyed in the Harpers' fire. Had it not been out of print, my occupation here would be gone," says Mr. Everett.

A very curious coloured sheet of Cambridge tufts, in the remarkable costumes of fifty years since, is given in the "Gradus ad Cantabrigiam,"* with the following explana-

* This work is, presumably, referred to in the following passage from "The Natural History of Tuft-hunters and Toadies" (Bogue, 1848):—"An Oxford tuft-hunter would dwell with delight upon the noble exploits of some expelled 'tuft.' . . . Better still is the tremendous *sang-froid* with which men who were never at Oxford or Cambridge in their lives talk of their 'larks' there with lords and marquises; and, having read the 'Art of Pluck,' the 'Gradus ad Cantabrigienses,' and certain other popular treatises, pass themselves off, by dint of memory and impudence, as thoroughbred Oxford swells" (p. 67). This work was one of the series of small illustrated shilling "Natural Histories" of Humbugs, Muffs, the Hawk Tribe, Bals-masqué, Ballet Girls, Model Men, Model Women, &c., inaugurated by Mr. Albert Smith's very successful book on the "Natural History of the Gent." But the book on tuft-hunters has but little reference to university tufts; and the anonymous author says, in the preface—"Those persons who read these pages with the expectation of finding

tion (*temp.* 1824) of "Fellow-commoners, students (*a non Studendo!*) who are, in appearance, the most shining men in the university. Their gowns are richly trimmed with gold or silver lace; their caps are covered with velvet, the tassels to which are of gold or silver. These gentlemen enjoy the privilege of cracking their bottle, and their joke—if they have one—in the public parlour or Combination Room, where they are literally 'Hail, fellow, well met.' It were almost endless to enumerate the privileges which these gentlemen enjoy by virtue of hereditary talents, instilled into their breeches pockets. Those privileges, however, have raised the envy of their inferiors in point of fortune, who, in describing them, seem to have racked their invention to find terms sufficiently indignant" (p. 50). *The Connoisseur* (No. 97), a paper of that date, in speaking of those gold tassels, said—"These gold threads have almost as much influence in the university as a red or blue ribbon at court."

We have spoken of some coloured illustrations of tufts. Those in Ackermann's splendid work are well known; but not so familiar to the reader, probably, would be those in a tiny four-volume work (also published by Ackermann, in 1827), entitled "The World in Miniature: England, Scotland, and Ireland. By W. H. Pyne." A portion of the fourth volume is devoted to coloured illustrations of the various academical costumes in which the Fellow-commoner of Cambridge appears, in all the glories of his gold tuft and gold-laced gown, a white tie, a blue swallow-tail coat with gilt buttons, a bunch of seals in the fob of his knee-breeches, stockings, and pumps. In the third volume there is a coloured illustration of the nobleman of Oxford, wearing "a gown of purple damask silk, richly ornamented with gold lace. This dress is worn at St. Mary's on star days, at dinners on gaudy days, in the theatre, in processions, and on other public occasions." The nobleman's second dress "is a scholar's gown made of silk; it has a tippet attached to the shoulders, like that of the proctor, pro-proctor, and collector. With both these dresses is worn a square cap of black velvet

with a gold tassel" (p. 86).* The following sensible remarks on tufts are also to be found in the same volume:—"The noblemen at both universities are distinguished from the other students by the splendour of their costume. This has often been objected to, for many reasons; among others, as one having a tendency to excite in the minds of these youths of noble birth an unbecoming consequence and superiority over those who are fellow-students; and another, as unpleasant to the feelings of their associates, by throwing them in the background in the opinion of gazing visitors at the universities, by what they consider so invidious a distinction. It would be well, perhaps, if these distinctions were dispensed with at college, where they are of no apparent advantage, and that some badge of distinction were to distinguish the nobleman when he had left college and mixed in general society; for then we should be able to discriminate, by some exterior sign at least, many a nobleman whose manners and habits induce the world to mistake for his groom" (p. 65-6). This is somewhat severe, especially as it was written of the noblemen of the court of the First Gentleman in Europe. Perhaps the writer would wish that the outward marks of the Japanese nobility and Chinese mandarins should be adopted by our own tufts; and that they should be distinguished, as was the great Panjandrum, by "the little button atop."

Some other coloured illustrations of university tufts may also be referred to. They are those by Mr. R. W. Buss, in F. W. Newman's translation, in three volumes, of V. A. Huber's "English Universities," 1843. A very remarkable (uncoloured) etching of what Mr. George Cruikshank considered to be the academical costume of two Oxford tufts will be found in the illustration to "Vincent Eden," in "Bentley's Miscellany" for June, 1839. These two tufts had been introduced to the reader in a previous chapter, at a supper at Raffleton's, of Trinity.

a mere lampoon upon our universities will be agreeably (or disagreeably) disappointed." The book, however, contains some astounding sketches of university men and their costumes, drawn by the imaginative Mr. H. G. Hine.

* The robes at both universities were, at that period, of various colours. Mr. Gunning, in his "Reminiscences of Cambridge," speaking of the year 1785, says—"All the noblemen appeared in their splendid robes, not only in St. Mary's and in the college halls, but also in the public walks. Their robes (which are now uniformly purple) at that time were of various colours, according to the tastes of the wearers—purple, white, green and rose-colour were to be seen at the same time. Lord Chartley wore rose-colour" (i., p. 26).

"It was a day of triumph for Raffleton. Two noble lords from Christ Church, in consideration of sundry bets lost to them by that gentleman for the express purpose of securing their acquaintance, and, furthermore, of their own wine not having arrived from town, had actually vouchsafed to sup with him; and there they sate, not paying much attention to their host, it is true, but, as far as eating and drinking went, condescending to make themselves most completely at home. The posts of honour had been, of course, assigned them. At the bottom of the table—his handsome face overshadowed with a profusion of dark, clustering hair, such as many a woman might have envied—sate the courted of Crockford's and Almack's—the richest among the young nobility of the day—the gay Lord Wynyard; while, on the right of Mr. Raffleton, was the somewhat undersized and boyish-looking Earl of May" (chap. iii., p. 391). Lord Ward and the Earl of March were here indicated; and the Mr. Richardson Lane, who also figures at the same party, was supposed to be meant for Mr. Dickson, of Ashwood, Worcestershire.

In the "Hints to Freshmen in the University of Oxford" (1845), is the following passage:—"Suppose yourself to be entertaining *la crème de la crème* of your acquaintance—some gentlemen-commoners of reserved temperament, a brace of baronets, and a living tuft. You are felicitating yourself on the extreme condescension which stimulates such exalted beings to eat and drink like ordinary individuals (to say the least of it), and you are contemplating in your mind's short-sighted eye the probability of your alliance with some one or other of his lordship's sisters—when your door is flung open by an overgrown 'omadawn,' with a moonlike face, which announces to you, as it peers over a chaos of ill-fitting clothes, that its me and master, your cousin Thomas, 'a heard-of to matriculate' at some hitherto university hall, adequately prepared with a super-career by a six years' residence on the Wolds annuated, &c. Cousin Tom immediately proclaims to inform you that he has brought the stockings, with your mamma's love; that your father has sold his hunter (you had recently alluded to a peerless stud), but intended to surprise you with a certificate in September (you had talked of the Moors in impatient anticipation); that Martha *was* to marry the surgeon; that the donkey was

dead (oh! that in this, Cousin Thomas had emulated his ass!); with various other intellectual sweetmeats. Undaunted and undismayed by eleven eye-glasses of superior crystal, and heedless of an audible 'Oh! dem!' from the tuft, this sweet connexion wonders, in the next place, how much you may have given for various articles of your furniture; remembers that those slippers were worked by Aunt Mary when he and Simon were under the influence of ring-worm; and, finally, halts to eat your Guava by the pound, and swallow your Lafitte in commensurate proportion."

This passage might afford our writers of modern comedies a very effective scene, in which a tuft-hunting undergraduate, boastful of his own imaginary home grandeurs, is suddenly intruded upon by a very verdant freshman, a Welsh cousin, sent up with a scholarship from a country grammar-school, who should persist in unfolding his budget of home news, after the fashion of Mr. Buckstone in "Cousin Joe." But even the dons themselves are guilty of the vice of tuft-hunting. A scene in illustration of this is given in the first volume of "Alma Mater; or, Seven Years at the University of Cambridge"—a work published in 1827, without the author's name, but known to be written by Mr. Thomas Wright, of Trinity College. The dialogue between the nobleman and the don occupies five pages; but the following passage will suffice to show the language used by the latter:—"Your lordship's superiority ascribe to my poor efforts the rank you your natural talents, as they entitle you to hold in society, innumerable instances of This is one of condescension and greatness your lordship have had the honour to experience of my the short but envied happiness of your lordship's friendship" (p. 77). And so on, *usque ad nauseam*.

We may quote from another and far more celebrated work of the same period, "Reginald Dalton," published in 1823, in three volumes, without the author's name, but afterwards acknowledged to be by Mr. J. G. Lockhart. In the town and gown scene, Jem Brank, the barber, appears, and proclaims—"I'm the boy that will stick by the tuft!" And Frederick Chisney, distributing the caps and gowns, says—"Here boys, here's your sort. Here's a cap for you, Hawkins; here's one for you, Dick Nowell. D—n me, here's one with a gold tuft; take

it, Sir James—you're the next step to honourable, however; and here's two gowns. By Jupiter, Dalton, you shall wear the doctor's one!"

By the way, in 1824, a volume of sixty-eight pages, entitled "Remarks on the Novel of Reginald Dalton," was published, with five plates by N. Whittock, an Oxford artist—the frontispiece to the book being an illustration of the town and gown scene.

A similar scene, entitled "Town and Gown; or, the Battle of the Togati and the Town Raff in the High-street, Oxford," was published at the same date, August 2, 1824, in that now scarce and remarkable work, "The English Spy. By Bernard Black-mantle," which was a pseudonym for Charles Molloy Westmacott. The illustrations to this work are drawn by Robert Cruikshank, the steel plates being engraved by him, and coloured. One of these represents the town and gown scene, in the letterpress to which is a passage very similar to that already quoted from "Reginald Dalton." Tom Echo, Horace Eglantine, and their companions have sent "Captain Cook," a Christ Church scout, for academicals, for fear that they should "be beating one another in the dark without caps and gowns." The scout comes back and says, "Here I be, zur. That old rogue, Dick Shirley, refuses to and any gowns. He says he has nothing housblemen's gowns and gold tufts in his Lionise sūpon which the Hon. Willyman cesty, that fe: By the honour of my an-stitch for Christ Chāll never draw another Come along, captain. as long as he lives. my ancestry, we'll uncase the honour of we'll have gowns, I warrant me; snyder; not noble, tufts or no tufts. Come'le or Cook." They then break into the tailor's shop, and, clearing it of its academicals, attire themselves for the fray (p. 286).

The series of articles that appeared, more than thirty years since, in the "New Monthly Magazine," under the title of "Peter Prig-gins, the College Scout," were very popular in their day; and were republished, in three volumes, in 1841, edited by Theodore Hook, and illustrated by Phiz. Their author was believed to be Mr. Hewlett, of Worcester College, Oxford. Among the many refer-ences to Christ Church tufts is that of "Wastepaper, tuft at Christ Church" (ii., 276), who becomes Lord Wastepaper and a senator, and refers to the time when "he

had been at Christ Church himself, and really did not know the name of any other college; but he should strongly advise consulting the University calendar" (ii., 268).

In 1750 and 1751, a monthly miscellany was published at Oxford, called "The Student," to which Dr. Johnson contributed the "Life of Cheynel," and in which Boswell says that "Mr. Bonnel Thornton and Mr. Colman were the principal writers." But Thomas Warton, Christopher Smart, and Christopher Pitt largely helped the work. In the second volume are some letters, sup-posed to be written by "The Female Stu-dent." In one of these she writes:—"Some few freshmen of fortune still distantly ad-mired me across a tea-table; a gold tuft would still deign to hand me to the concert" (ii., 51). In another letter, she writes of "the rich, the noble, the polite Lord Vainly. He was the grandson of a new-fangled peer, and inherited all the sense, all the taste, all the virtue of his upstart ancestors. His lordship was too conscious of the intrinsic merit of his title not to be surrounded by those vile academical parasites called *tuft-hunters*. The young ones would drink, game, intrigue, take schemes, or do anything with my lord—at his lordship's expense; even the old senior fellows—(who, forgetting their mushroom rise and native dunghills, lord it so imperiously over their juniors)—would cringe, and fawn, and stoop to the meanest offices for the sake of a present dinner, or the prospect of future preferment. Nothing was heard but 'my lord' and 'your lordship.' My lord had the best apartments, my lord gave the best entertainments, my lord drank the best claret, my lord rode the best horse, my lord had the best taste, the best breeding, the best everything; for within the university d, excellences are implied in the very name

He is
Count Baganeeded in her admiration by a gold tuft, the dam and "the velvet cap, the to the Count's humbler own, all gave place (ii., 107, 109). In the first of a pensioner" same work are some verses in imita of the Horace (book i., ode 22), in which the terrible Cambridge proctor is thus men-tioned:—

"For in his sight (whose brow severe
Each morn the coffee-houses fear,
Each night the taverns dread;
To whom the tatter'd Sophs bend low,
To whom the gilded tossils bow,
And Graduates nod the head)"—(i., 312).

It is worth while here to note the word "tossils," which, probably, was the fashionable pronunciation of "tassels" at that time. And this pronunciation lingered for a century; for, when we were at college, a friend of ours—who, being an earl's eldest son, was a born tuft—invariably spoke of his cap's tassel as its "tossil." He also pronounced "wrapped" as "wropped;" and when we urged that he should not say "wropped in swaddling clothes," he replied that, if he sounded the *a* in the first word as *o*, we also did the same with the *a* in "swaddling." We therefore gave up the pronunciation of the English language as a hopeless undertaking.

But although the gold "tossil" or tassel may be abandoned in our universities, and although it and the silk gown have already been exchanged by the noblemen of Christ Church, Oxford, for the plain cap and gown of the commoner—Prince Hassan being the solitary exception to the present new regulation—yet it may confidently be predicted that, even if tufts and tuft-hunters should cease to be referred to by name, their actual existence will still be maintained. But though the existence of tufts will sustain the parasitical race of tuft-hunters, yet we may still hope and trust that, in the words of wise and witty Dr. Robert South, "there are many men in the world, who, without the least arrogance or self-conceit, have yet so just a value both for themselves and others, as to scorn to flatter and gloze, to fall down and worship, to lick the spittle and kiss the feet of any proud, swelling, overgrown, domineering huff whatsoever. And such persons generally think it enough for them to show their superiors respect without adoration, and civility without servitude." It would be well if these words could be impressed on all tuft-hunters.

CROCODILES' NESTS.

CROCODILES are a class of animals whose domestic habits, for obvious reasons, have not been carefully observed; their manners to strangers being far from attractive, and their haunts being generally unsalubrious. This much is, however, known regarding them, that they commonly deposit their eggs in the mud or sand of a river side; and that one of the parents watches the eggs thus deposited is obvious, from the remarkable story, told by Mrs. Petherick of

a Nile crocodile that was perfectly harmless till her eggs were stolen, after which she attacked all men and animals that approached her, and finally seized and mounted upon a horse, which, in a state of fearful terror, galloped with its rider into the travellers' camp.

The nearest approximation to a nest that we had ever heard of till the last few weeks was in the case of the American alligators. The mother has been seen scratching a hole with her paw in the sand by the water side, and placing the eggs in a regular layer therein. She then scrapes some sand, dry leaves, grass, and mud over them, smooths down the layer, and deposits a second set of eggs; these are similarly covered, and more eggs, amounting in all to about fifty, are laid. The hatching is effected by the heat of the sun and decaying vegetable matter, and without the aid of incubation. These observations were made in South America, and in some parts of North America (Florida).

The habits of this class of reptiles are, as we shall now show, apparently changing. Regular nests of a far more complicated nature are made by certain Ceylon crocodiles. For our knowledge of this remarkable fact we are indebted to a memoir by the Rev. Bancroft Boake, vice-president of the Royal Asiatic Society. Two nests only have as yet been discovered, each of which was within a few miles of Colombo, in Ceylon. The first nest was discovered by Mr. Symonds, who found it to contain about one hundred and fifty eggs, which he succeeded in carrying off, although he was repeatedly charged by the parent who was watching them. Mr. Boake having been told by Mr. Symonds of this discovery, the two gentlemen proceeded to examine the nest. It was constructed amongst the bushes on the swampy bank of a river, at a distance of a few feet from the water, and consisted of wet vegetable matter, mixed with mud, and rising to the height of two or three feet. In shape it resembled a small conical haystack, while in consistency it was like a heap of dung. The base of the cone was surrounded by a circular trench, more than three feet broad, and about two feet deep, in which the crocodile kept watch. The circle enclosed by the trench was more than six feet in diameter. The eggs were placed at a height of at least two feet above the surface of the water.

The same gentlemen were informed by some natives who accompanied them that there was another nest about a mile off, which had not been disturbed. This nest was found to be in all respects like the first, except that it was smaller, and that, besides the surrounding trench, there were one or two holes in the swamp in which, according to the natives, the old crocodile used to lie. In this case there was no crocodile on guard, and one of the party removed the top of the nest and took away twenty-five eggs. It is probable that these nests were built by two different species of crocodiles, one of which is larger and fiercer than the other.

Mr. Boake tried to bring up some young crocodiles by hand; but they are not pleasant pets, as they obstinately refused all kinds of food; and, in order to keep them alive, it was necessary to thrust bits of raw meat down their throats with a stick two or three times a week.

The above account of the nesting of the crocodile in Ceylon was recorded in the "Zoologist," and has led another contributor to that journal to describe the nests of certain alligators. The following are the most important paragraphs of his article:—

"In the summer of 1864," writes Captain Feilden, "I was in Florida, and my tour of duty took me almost to the western or Gulf of Mexico side of the state. My route took me through Hunter County; and, in a little village near Panesofkee Lake, I remained three or four days with an old backwoodsman, who showed me through the wild forests.

"Paneeofkee Lake, which is about six miles long and some two miles broad, was full of alligators: in some places they were floating ten or a dozen together. Hundreds were basking on the banks; and, as we rode along the lake-side, a frightened one would every now and then slide into the water with a tremendous splash. My guide, who was an intelligent man, seeing me interested in the alligators, asked me whether I should like to see their nests. I replied 'Yes.'

"After leaving the lake we soon rode out, through the forest, on to a 'savannah.' This term is applied in Florida to tracts of land—or rather depressions in the land—which, in the wet season, are under water. Here and there on these savannahs you will notice, on the spots of greatest depression, pools of water with reeds growing.

In the summer time these are drinking-places for the cattle, and round these little 'meres' I was soon pointed out the nests of the alligators. At first sight I thought they must be the nests of birds; but having dismounted, and hitched our horses to the bough of a tree, we walked to the nearest nest and examined it. The nest was a conical mound, built of mud and reeds, about three feet high, with a slight depression in the centre. I do not think it had any eggs in it; if so, they must have been covered up. The nest was surrounded by a trench full of muddy water, and from this excavation some of the materials for the nest had evidently been taken. I trust some careful observer will note how the alligator scratches out the mud to form the conical nest, and in what proportion she mixes the reeds and vegetable matter: the process must be very interesting.

"My guide told me that the female alligator was perhaps hid in the trench, or in some of the wallowing holes, of which there were several in the vicinity of the nest. Only having a switch with me on this occasion, I did not attempt to examine the nest more closely than from the outside of the trench, as a crack on the legs from the tail of a ten-foot alligator would be no joke.

"I noticed on most of the savannahs in this immediate neighbourhood, wherever some water was left, several of the conical-mound nests of the alligators. In the shape of the nest and the surrounding trench they seem to agree with their Cingalese cousins."

It is very remarkable that, within a space of a few months, we should learn that two distinct families of the order *Crocodylia*, inhabiting opposite sides of the globe, form complicated nests for the reception—and probably the partial incubation—of their eggs. It is difficult to suppose that, if such nests were built from time immemorial, they had never previously been seen or even heard of by naturalists.

A distinguished French naturalist has lately maintained that, in the ancient city of Rouen, the house-martens have completely modified the form of their nests and the shape of the opening, so as to meet and fit in with the recent changes in house architecture; and that their present nests stand to those of half a century ago in much the same relation as a prize labourer's cottage stands to an Irish cabin. Are the crocodiles and birds beginning to take up sanitary ideas?

THE MORTIMERS :

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK III.—CHAPTER IV.

INTRODUCES MISS BERTIE.

AFTER Reginald Erle had so far recovered from the attack of acute rheumatism—induced by the chill he had taken after his leap into the river—as to make it desirable that he should be removed, Dr. Gasc took him to the sea. Here—at a watering-place on the south coast—he rapidly regained his health and strength, and soon became himself again.

In hearing of the loss of the Good Uncle's fortune, Reginald felt no selfish or ungenerous apprehension for his own future. On the contrary, he rather gained a new vigour in strolling on the cliffs by the sea, and there making bold resolutions to work hard himself, and win back for his dear friend something of what he had lost.

Here, with the green waves at his feet, and their fresh, bright foam drifting in his face—or on the beach below, with his pipe in his mouth, and a book on the seat by his side—he formed a hundred schemes and plans for prosperous advancement, and built innumerable castles in the air, in those his long, idle days, when convalescence pressed hard on the heels of sickness. He felt some ambition. If it were no more than the honest thirst of independence, that was enough to spur him on to strong effort. And though these *châteaux en Espagne*—so admirable, so complete in every detail—that he reared with so much ease under the blue skies, had no more stable existence than the white rings of smoke circling upward from out his meerschaum's bowl, they did him good. They roused him from the lethargic carelessness often bequeathed by illness to the recovering patient.

In a few weeks—some four or five—spent in the fresh, bracing air and bright sunshine, he became a new man. And, as he offered his right arm to the Doctor in their walks, instead of leaning as before on him for support, it was hardly possible to recognize in the stout, strong-limbed man, the enfeebled invalid of a month or six weeks ago. On Dr. Gasc, too, the invigorating sea breezes, and the change of scene and of his mode of life, had produced a visible effect

for good. He bore his great loss patiently and calmly, as became a philosopher; and looked steadily—it might almost be said hopefully—at their future. The manuscripts and notebooks containing the materials for his projected work on geology he had brought with him in his trunks; but they lay there unopened and untouched. A few times he had been out with his hammer and his bag; but it was plain he had not yet the heart to go to work at his old pursuits—the friends of many a bygone year.

Once or twice, as Erle grew stronger, the Doctor had mentioned his loss, and made some remarks upon his intentions as to the future. And then he had repeated the words of his letter: "I have no care for myself, it is for you and Madam I am grieved."

One evening, towards the end of their stay, they were sitting together after dinner by the open window of their room, facing the sea. The sun was dipping into the waves in golden splendour; and, for some minutes, both Reginald and Dr. Gasc sat in silence gazing upon the many-coloured glories of the sunset. After the sultry day, the night breeze was deliciously cool and refreshing, and tempted them to linger at the balcony. Erle stepped out, and, leaning against the rail, finished his pipe in the open air. Presently he felt the Doctor's hand laid gently on his shoulder.

"Had you not better come in? It soon gets cold and chilly."

Tapping his pipe against the window first, to knock the ashes out, Erle came into the room.

"We return in a few days," said Dr. Gasc; "and now you are happily almost strong again, it were as well, perhaps, that we should have a few words together about a matter of which, I doubt not, we are both thinking—too often, I dare say."

Erle nodded assent, and took his seat on a low chair by the Doctor's side. Placing his hand on Reginald's knee, he said—

"I have thought the matter over, and I have written to Madam and Lavelle; and they think, as I do, that the wisest thing for me to do will be to go at once over to Paris."

"To Paris?" said Reginald, somewhat surprised.

"Yes," the Doctor continued; "it is long since I was there. What changes there have been!"

"Very great, indeed, since you left it."

"Ah! great, indeed," said Dr. Gasc, with a sigh. "Madam must go with me to manage for me. Poor woman, she thinks I should be lost without her."

"And Lavelle?"

"Is to have a lodging near the Oratory with another of his cloth. You are to live for a time with Mrs. Grafton—at least, if you think you will be comfortable there; and"—the Doctor proceeded, with a trace of sadness in his tone—"our house in Bartholomew-square we will let—"

"Must we let the dear old house?" Reginald said, almost involuntarily.

"It will bring to our exchequer some hundred and fifty pounds a-year, my boy; and we must let it, since we cannot afford to live in it."

"And you," asked Reginald, "why do you go to Paris?"

"For a time only, and for more reasons than one, my dear boy. Because I can learn there exactly what chance there is of my ever getting anything of my property back. Because there live some members of my family who will hardly see"—this the Doctor said with emotion—"Achille de Gasc want, and not offer him help."

"It is long since you saw them?"

"Few are still alive whom I have ever seen. It is long since I had any correspondence with them; for you know I am not much given to letter-writing. But my claim shall not be dishonoured if I have reason to prefer it."

"They are rich?"

"Not rich, certainly; but with enough."

"And when will you go?"

"Madam will be ready to start in a few days. And now of you. I shall be sorry to part from you, Reginald, even for a short time. But it is for the best. I hoped you would return to your college and take your degree. You object, and I do not desire to press it."

"Thank you," said Reginald; "I would rather do anything than return. The question seems to be, what am I to do?"

"Exactly," ejaculated the Doctor, nodding his head sadly, two or three times.

"I mean," said Erle, anxious to remove from the Doctor's mind any misapprehension as to his real meaning, "what profession must I choose? In which can I soonest earn an honourable living, and so help myself and you, my very good Uncle?"

"Do not think of me—I am old, and my wants are few and easily satisfied. It is for you I am grieved at the loss of my money—that you, for whom I had planned a future so different, should be obliged to share my discomfort."

"Let us hope there is good luck in store for us," said Reginald, hopefully. "I feel so well—so strong—that I can do anything."

"It fills me with pleasure to see you so full of hope, my dear boy," returned Dr. Gasc. "I would, then—since you will not resume your residence at the university—have you study physic in London. You know my attachment to the natural sciences. I should be pleased, indeed, if you could make medicine your profession; and find pleasure, and honour, and profit, in treading those quiet paths in which I have walked so long. In England, less than in France, is science rewarded with honours and prizes; but receive this as my experience—that the pleasure attendant upon exploring the mysterious handiworks of nature is of greater worth than all other rewards."

Erle expressed his willingness to accede to the Doctor's wishes; and it was settled that in a few days they should return to London, and that he should then take up his quarters at Mrs. Grafton's house in Upper Gore-street.

Accordingly, the Doctor, having let his house in Bartholomew-square, left for Paris, accompanied by his faithful housekeeper, Madam McCara; and Erle settled down at once to his professional studies.

But, after a few months spent in attendance on lectures, he conceived a very strong dislike for a profession—it must be admitted—he never would have chosen for himself. He had entered upon it solely because he knew the good Doctor would delight in having him do so. When, however, he, after some months' experience, found his profession utterly unsuited to his tastes, he consulted the Doctor upon the feasibility of giving it up.

"I am sorry," wrote Dr. Gasc from Paris, "to hear of your dislike. I had hoped you would get to love the pursuit of science as well as I do. But do just as you like in a matter in which your happiness is so nearly concerned."

Erle accordingly determined upon changing his studies. And, instead of courting the Grace Physic, he now applied all his energies to her sister Law.

Knowing well the narrowness of the poor Doctor's impoverished exchequer, Erle became most anxious to add something thereunto. He felt that, although the Doctor assured him they had ample funds to defray the costs of his years of professional training, it was very desirable he should earn something for himself, if he could. Here the difficulty arose, and the solution of this problem cost our hero many an hour of thought and care; though, at last, circumstances enabled him to solve it to his own satisfaction, and to remove the burden of his support from the shoulders of his devoted friend and parent by adoption—the good Dr. Gasc.

But, in the meantime, the accounts of the Good Uncle's fortune in Paris were by no means calculated to allay Reginald's fears and anxieties on his behalf. That with the faithful Madam the Doctor had settled down in a humble apartment, and that the chance of recovering even a portion of his property was remote, was all that Erle knew. Of his relatives, Dr. Gasc had as yet said nothing in his letters to his adopted son.

Although Erle, of course, spent a great part of his time over his books in his own room, he occasionally spent an hour with Mrs. Grafton's distinguished lodger, the tragedian of the Royal Victoria Theatre—Mr. Robert Grobey. At times, too, of an evening, he would drop into Mrs. Grafton's snug little sitting-room after Grobey returned from the theatre, and they would all take some tea together: Mrs. Grafton's pretty niece, Miss Bertie—or, to give her name in full, Alberta—presiding daintily over the board, and handling the cups and pouring out the tea with much native grace of manner.

Miss Bertie was Grobey's *protégée* and pupil; for, having insisted, in the self-willed and wayward manner peculiar to very pretty young ladies, upon seeking fame and fortune on the stage, it was only natural that her professional training should be entrusted by her aunt—who very reluctantly gave her consent—to that good-tempered ornament of the English stage.

Whether the young lady, whose household occupations had from her early years made her familiar with books of plays—from having to apply the domestic duster to their covers—had caught the histrionic flame from Mr. Robert Grobey or not, is a point we are unable to clear up satis-

factorily. But certain it is, that gentleman had caught a flame of another and more interesting kind from having been brought into daily contact with the beautiful Miss Bertie. That she possessed attractions of no common order was a fact patent to all who had the pleasure of looking upon the large sparkling brown eyes and cherry lips of the young lady. But in Grobey's mind were some doubts and misgivings as to her mental qualifications for those lofty branches of her art in which he wished to see her shine. But, whatever might be the opinion of others on this and kindred matters concerning her, it was clear that Miss Bertie was superlatively well satisfied with Miss Bertie, and bestowed upon herself a general and unreserved admiration only second to that accorded to her charms by her devoted admirer, Mr. Robert Grobey, tragedian, aforesaid.

He had been engaged upon instructing his fair pupil in the mysteries of elocution, deportment, and stage business for a year or two; and having at length prepared her thoroughly for being "brought out," her *début* was now shortly to take place.

In the watchful eyes of her aunt, Miss Bertie was regarded as being as nearly perfection as possible; and although the good woman was undoubtedly sorry to see her niece bent upon going on the stage, yet she was quite prepared to share in the pleasure of the triumph that would assuredly follow the appearance of so brilliant a star in the theatrical sky. It was also a fact worthy of note—though not, perhaps, especially creditable to Mrs. Grafton's powers of discerning things immediately under her notice—that she was entirely oblivious to the admiration felt by Grobey for the charms of her pretty niece—an admiration not exactly reciprocal.

To Erle, who had known both aunt and niece from his earliest years of recollection, the passages between Grobey and Miss Bertie afforded a considerable fund of amusement; for the tragedian's pantomimic love-making was immensely comic, as he rarely advanced further in the matter of declaring the state of his affections than making loving eyes at the object of his devotions.

So the weeks sped by until the evening came for Miss Bertie Howard's appearance. Actresses, like Popes, change their names before making their *début* in a new capacity.

So Miss Grafton became Miss Howard. But it is not with her first, or indeed any other, appearance on the stage with which this history is concerned.

NOTES ON IMITATION AND PLAGIARISM.

AN author may imitate, or he may steal. The former is often the means of illustrating the highest genius; as when Virgil imitates Homer, and makes his copy his own creation by infusing his own inimitable style. Imitation, indeed, is sometimes unconscious and by process of absorption; as when a man is so steeped with the spirit of a great master that his thoughts all seem to take one mould, and reappear after his teacher's manner.

Literary theft—plagiarism proper—is quite another thing. It is a distinct art, requiring long and careful study and much practice. Like many other arts once in great favour, it has sadly degenerated in these latter days. We no longer hear of cases such as that of the great Dr. Rolt, of Dublin, who got an early copy of Akenside's "Pleasures of the Imagination," and republished it as his own; or that of the Rev. Mr. Innes, who did the same thing with Dr. Campbell's "Authenticity of Gospel History." In the latter instance, the reverend thief was rewarded by a fat living, as a token of gratitude from a patron who read the book, before the robbery was discovered.

The commonest form of plagiarism—real or apparent—is, of course, that of a poetical image. This is, in many cases, merely accidental, and may nearly always be defended as accidental. For instance, where Herrick says—

"It is an active flame that flies
First to the babies of the eyes,
And charms them there with lullabies."

Or, in another place—

"Or those babies in your eyes,
In their crystal nunneries."

Did he remember the same phrase in Ben Jonson? It occurs, if I mistake not, in the "Alchemist."

Mr. Charles Reade, too, in the "Cloister and the Hearth," speaks of Gerard and Margaret "reading babies in each other's eyes." It is so pretty a phrase, that one hopes its recurrence was accidental.

One occasionally, however, recognizes a

term which bears obviously more than an accidental resemblance to another. Thus, the following is clearly a plagiarism. Everybody knows Suckling's exquisite lines—

"Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice, stole in and out
As if they feared the light."

See how Herrick vulgarizes and spoils it:—

"Her pretty feet
Like snails (!) did creep
A little out, and then,
As if they played at bopeep,
Did soon draw in again."

Here, again, is a sin brought home to the reverend author of the "Night Thoughts." Speaking of the sun, he calls him, in a very coarse and unpoetical way,

"Rude drunkard, rising rosy from the main."

He must have remembered Wither's lines—

"And e'en the sun, which you might guess
By his drunken fiery face no less."

Many apparent plagiarisms of the present day arise from our habit of perpetually reading. Clearness of head and memory give way under its pernicious influence. We no longer think our own thoughts, because we are always occupied with the thoughts of others; and, if we want to write, we have to pick our own out of the mass of other people's thoughts floating about in that vast tank—a man's brain. Now, as Lord Fopington so justly remarks, "I think that a man of parts may very well occupy himself with his own thoughts." And the most original writers—*e. g.*, Dickens or Carlyle—seem the least encumbered with superfluous reading. There is no internal evidence in Dickens's books to show that he has ever read anything except Smollett.

Sometimes, too, a book appears which has a remarkable success, and gets all the credit of being based on an entirely original set of ideas: thus the "Pilgrim's Progress," which worked its way *upwards*, unlike the general run of books. Now, nearly all the leading incidents in Christian's journey are founded on a book of the fourteenth century, by one De Guilleville, or De Déguilleville—for his name is written both ways. This work had a great popularity. It was translated into English, certainly early in the fifteenth century; and I think there cannot be a doubt that the story, so captivating, so readily adapted to almost any view of the problem of life, never quite faded out of

men's minds, and that some of the fragments were heard by John Bunyan, perhaps, in his childhood. This does not, however, detract in the smallest degree from the genius, and even from the originality, of our noble allegory.

An instance, which I do not remember to have seen noticed, of what I believe to be the germ of one of the most original and beautiful of modern novels—Kingsley's "Hypatia"—is taken from a passage in Fielding's "Journey from this World to the Next."

Balthazar is a Jew and an Alexandrian. He remembers the massacre of the Jews by the Christians. He was in love with Hypatia, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of a poor philosopher. He might have married her, in spite of her poverty; but she was murdered by the Christians, and by her death he loses a valuable jewel which he had presented to her.

The idea of Sheridan's famous play, "The Critic," appears to have been borrowed from Fielding's "Tumble-down Dick." There, the prompter, machinist, and Fustian, the poet, assemble for the rehearsal of Fustian's new play, making remarks on the conduct of the piece exactly in the same way as Sheridan's characters. But this, again, may have been borrowed from Rochester's "Rehearsal."

Mr. Charles Reade seems to understand, as well as any modern writer, the art of adapting scenes and incidents, and making them serve his own purpose. Thus, some scenes of the "Cloister and the Hearth" are taken almost literally from Erasmus. This is quite legitimate. The "Colloquia" furnish a picture of contemporary life almost unequalled; and he who would write of the times of Erasmus must borrow from the pages of Erasmus.

Everybody who has read "Hard Cash" remembers, however, the great scene where the heavy merchantman runs down and crushes the pirate. Curiously enough, exactly the same thing is done by a merchantman in a novel some thirty years old, called "Paul Periwinkle." There, however, the pirate is a French privateer. Of course, the idea may have been original with both novelists.

I said above that there is nothing in Charles Dickens to show that that author had ever read anything but Smollett. Perhaps, however, he has read Fielding as well.

When he makes Mr. Pickwick pass a few months in the Fleet prison, did it occur to him how many worthies had preceded him? Did he have in his mind Captain Booth, Mr. Tom Jones, Mr. Peregrine Pickle, Ferdinand Count Fathom, and Mr. Heartfree? All these characters are in Fielding and Smollett.

Writers, too, repeat themselves. A great sinner in this respect is Oliver Goldsmith. Sometimes a jingle of names takes possession of him. Thus, in the "Miscellaneous Essays" (xvi.), he speaks of "our daughter, Anna Amelia Wilhelmina Carolina." In the "Citizen of the World" (xvi.) he says, "You shall see my little girl, Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Tibbs;" and, in the "Vicar of Wakefield," we have "Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs." Again, in the Essays—"Mr. Grogan, this is always the case when you find me in spirits. . . . It is seldom that I am in spirits, but this is always the case." And, in "She Stoops to Conquer," Tony says, "Snubbing this way, when I'm in spirits. If I'm to have any good, let it come of itself, not to keep dinging, dinging it into one so."

And one more: in Essay xiv. he describes a Scotch marriage. "Miss Jenny Hastings went down to Scotland with a tailor, who, to be sure, was a very agreeable sort of man. . . . They parted; and now keep separate garrets in Rosemary-lane." This was too good to be thrown away in an essay. Accordingly, it is *réchauffé* in the "Good-natured Man." "To be sure," says the landlady, "we had a sweet little couple set off from this two days ago. . . . The gentleman, for a tailor, sure, was as fine a spoken tailor as ever blew froth from a full pot. . . . There was, of my knowledge, Miss Grace Fag, that married her father's footman. Alack a-day! She and her husband soon parted; and they now keep separate cellars in Hedge-lane."

Compare, too, the "History of the Man in Black" with that of George Primrose in the "Vicar of Wakefield." The same idea runs through both, possibly because poor Goldsmith's personal experience occurs in both.

Shakespeare, as might have been expected, seldom repeats the same thought. Here, however, is an instance:—

"Noble madam,
Men's evil manners live in brass; their virtues
We write in water."—("Hen. VIII.," iv., 2.)

Compare the preceding passage with "Julius Caesar," iii., 2 :—

"The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones."

Sometimes a single idea serves with author after author. Thus, the *subsidiary*, not the leading, idea of Don Quixote was that of a single-minded, courageous gentleman, one with whom duty was above all other considerations, and with whom high-mindedness, honour, and chivalrous faith were the necessary attributes of a knight. The leading idea—which we are apt to lose sight of—was the subordination of these very qualities to his craze. Don Quixote, however, is our modern gentleman, *par excellence*. He has given birth to Captain Shandy, to Lieutenant Lismahago, to Captain Roland de Caxton; and to the greatest of all, Colonel Newcome. I trace his influence, too, all through Kingsley, in his Major Scott, in Frank Leigh, in Raphael Aben Ezra, and in his fancy sketch of Sir Walter Raleigh.

It has always been a favourite amusement with readers to trace out resemblances and origins—to find the source of an incident, the first conception of a character, the hidden cause of a happy metaphor. But we must remember that it is no detracting from genius to owe something. Shakspeare created less than he re-moulded. He took a story, and re-cast it in so marvellous a shape as no longer to be recognized. He found a character, dim, shadowy, bodiless: he gave it back to the world clear, shapely, and bright. So, a rude modeller shapes and fashions his clay into a rough resemblance to his conceptions; and the sculptor taking it, with a few touches of his dexterous fingers, gives it back an Antinous or a Venus. For the highest kind of art is to represent or to describe the most finished productions of nature.

Chaucer did much the same thing. With two exceptions, the story of "Topaze," and that of "Cambuscan Bold," every tale in Chaucer can be traced to its origin. The fact is, that the mediæval writers never dreamed of originating a story. They took what they could find, and dressed it up their own way. Our modern Chaucer, Mr. Morris, in his "Earthly Paradise," has imitated his master in this respect also, that he adapts his stories.

I have not traced them all, but I may mention one of them, where the original is in parts followed so closely as to make it

look almost like a translation. Mr. Morris calls it "The Story of the Man who was Born to be a King." This most delightful tale, in which Mr. Morris has made but few additions and alterations, is among the French novels of the thirteenth century, published in the "Bibliothèque Elzévirienne."

WESLEY'S WIG.

AN anecdote is told of an old woman who went to hear George Whitfield preach, but, from the crowd, was unable to get within hearing distance; yet, although unable to gratify her ears, she felt that her eyes had been quite rewarded; for, on her return home, she expressed her excessive satisfaction with the preacher, because—although prevented from listening to his words—she had "seen his blessed wig." Whitfield wore a funny-looking little wig, of that curt and concise description called the "bob," which, as compared with the long, flowing locks of the divines' wigs of that period, was as different from them as a barrister's wig is to the "full-bottomed" wig of our judges and Lord Chancellor. Wesley's wig was long, and flowing, and white; and, from what has lately been brought to light concerning it, it would seem to be regarded, in that old woman's words, as "a blessed wig."

In the *Times*, March 15, 1870, under the heading "Spurious Relics," was the following letter:—

"SIR—In your impression of March 11, you say that, beneath the foundation stone of the Wesleyan chapel at Burslem, were deposited the other day a piece of John Wesley's coffin and shroud, and also a lock of his hair. I am sorry to have to challenge your informant to prove the authenticity of this last relic; but I am informed that the precious remnant is a bit of John Wesley's wig.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,
"F. S. A.

"Staffordshire Potteries."

On the same day that this letter appeared in the leading journal, a gentleman was addressing to its editor the following letter, which was printed in the *Times*, March 17:—

"SIR—In the *Times* of the 11th inst. you refer to the deposit in the memorial stone of the *façade* now in course of erection connected with the Burslem Wesleyan Chapel of a number of relics of Wesley; and, to indicate the light in which you regard this transaction, the notice is headed 'Protestant Relic Worship.' These articles were given to me by a person unconnected with Methodism, with a special request that I would put them into the bottle—containing, besides, a number of documents relating to the building, the trustees of the estate, &c. On my own responsibility, I dropped them into the bottle,

thinking that their interment was the best course I could pursue, never supposing that anyone would for a moment conclude that they were regarded with superstitious reverence; and, I may add, the bottle was inserted in the stone on an early part of the day, and formed no part of the subsequent ceremonial. As, however, a construction has been put upon this transaction so widely at variance with what was intended, I deemed it best to have them taken out and returned to their former owners.—I am, sir, yours truly, "JAMES DEAN, Chapel Steward.

"Burslem, March 15."

The latter letter shirks the question whether the precious hairs were a veritable lock from Wesley's head, or were only a culling from his "blessed wig." Presumably, they came, as the first letter suggested, from the wig. And we know that Wesley's wig, if not regarded altogether in the light of his blessed wig, was yet deemed worthy of careful preservation, and of something approaching to veneration. For, in the second Public Exhibition at Leeds, in 1843, one of the objects of attraction was Wesley's wig—a long, flowing, white wig, shown under a glass case, and thus described in the catalogue:—"No. 152. The Wig of the Rev. John Wesley, bequeathed by him to the father of the present proprietor, Mr. J. Hale."

While Mr. Hale thus proudly proclaims himself to be "the present proprietor" of the wig, it would be satisfactory to learn on what evidence we are to rely as to the bequeathing of the said wig. Was it so bequeathed in a written will and last bequest; or did Wesley, on his death-bed, hand over his wig to "the present proprietor's" father, and request him to wear it for his sake? Here, undoubtedly, is a difficulty, and it extends further than would at first appear; for Wesley had not only a great love for his own natural hair, but he entertained a decided dislike to the wearing of a wig. Tea and wigs would seem to have been the objects of his aversion. The tea he had given up because he considered his health to be injured by its use; but when his mother told him that he was impairing his constitution by wearing his hair so long, and urged him to get it cut and trimmed, and to powder and dress it according to the prevailing fashion, John Wesley flatly refused to shear those locks which he allowed to flow over his shoulders in an unkempt state, and which caused him to be remarked among his fellow-students at Oxford for the singularity of his appearance. He declared that the money sinfully wasted on hair-powder and hair-dressing ought to be given to the

poor; and, although eventually he yielded to the middle course proposed by his brother Samuel, and cut it somewhat shorter—"by which means," wrote his brother, "the singularity of his appearance would be lessened without entrenching upon his meritorious economy"—yet he still resolutely adhered to his original opinion, and thus wrote:—"As to my hair, I am much more sure that what this enables me to do is according to the Scripture, than I am that the length of it is contrary to it."

As to Wesley's wearing his own hair, and not a wig—at any rate, until the very close of his eventful and important life—we have many incidental proofs. When John Nelson described his preaching at Moorfields, he tells how, "as soon as he got upon the stand, he stroked back his hair." In 1743, when he was attacked by the brutal rioters at Walsall, they dragged him along by the hair of his head; although afterwards one of the same rioters, won by Wesley's apostolic boldness and words, protected him from the mob, and said that he would not allow them to touch a hair of his head. Years after this Wesley preached against men "wearing gay, fashionable, or expensive perukes;" and in the Conference of 1782, when the question was expressly put to him whether it were well for preachers to powder their hair and to wear artificial curls—he being then seventy-nine years of age—curtly answered—"To abstain from both is the more excellent way." Crabbe, the poet, who, although much annoyed by the proceedings of the Wesleyans in his parish of Muston, yet entertained a great reverence for Wesley himself, of whom he said—

"Their John, the elder, was the John divine"—
(*"The Borough,"* Letter iv.)

went to hear him preach at a dissenting-chapel in Lowestoft. It was on the last of his peregrinations. He was exceedingly old and infirm, and was attended, and almost supported, in the pulpit, by a young minister on each side. In the course of his sermon he repeated—though with an application of his own—the lines from Anacreon:—

"Oft am I by women told,
Poor Anacreon! thou grow'st old;
See, thine hairs are falling all,
Poor Anacreon! how they fall!
Whether I grow old or no,
By these signs I do not know;
But this I need not to be told,
'Tis time to *live* if I grow old."

Crabbe "was much struck by his reverend appearance and cheerful air, and the beautiful cadence he gave to these lines; and, after the service, introduced himself to the patriarch, who received him with benevolent politeness."

It must have been somewhat singular to hear Anacreon quoted by a preacher in a Wesleyan chapel; and, certainly, the preacher could not have declaimed the lines with much appropriateness if his scanty hairs had been concealed from the view of the congregation by a full flowing wig. Still, in the face of published portraits, and the example of the perruquier's art numbered 152 in the Leeds Exhibition, we are constrained to accept Wesley's wig as a fact; and if, as it would seem, it did not adorn his head when Crabbe heard him preach in the chapel at Lowestoft, we are driven to the conclusion that he only assumed it at the very close of his life—when those falling hairs, of which he had spoken from the pulpit, had all fallen away, and had caused him to feel the comfort of a wig. Yet, it is very evident that, if he wore a wig, John Wesley must have recanted from the opinions he had held so strongly on this subject during his long lifetime.

There are at least three portraits of him, representing him in full face, three-quarter face, and profile; they are all by nameless artists, but they all agree in the representation of his wig. So far, there is artistic consentaneity of opinion; and, in consequence, we are unable to recognize a figure of Wesley, unless he is depicted in a long flowing wig of silvery hair, disposed in two ranges of neat curls. Painters, therefore, when they represent Wesley preaching on his father's tomb at Epworth, June, 1742, when he was then thirty-nine years of age, are compelled to do violence to chronology, and to place him before the spectator as that venerable divine of eighty years, with the full-flowing, curly, white wig, which at once proclaims—"This is the Wesley."

Mr. Marshall Claxton has been the only artist who has had the temerity to run tilt against the popular notion; for, when he painted the picture of "Wesley and his friends at Oxford"—engraved by Bellin—he depicted him, faithfully and conscientiously, as a young man, wearing his own long hair. But, when the engraving was offered to probable purchasers, they declined to buy it, because it did not show them the

well-known venerable figure with the wig of white hair. Wesley's wig had become a stereotyped idea; and a youthful Wesley, with natural brown locks, was regarded as a rank impostor. It must be *aut Cæsar aut nullus*—either the wig or nothing.

Perhaps when Wesley brought his mind to the wearing of a wig, he may have adopted one that, in its style, resembled the mode in which he wore his natural hair. And we are told by Southey that, in his old age, as Wesley walked along the streets of a crowded city, he attracted notice by "his long hair, white and bright as silver" (ii., 397).

Southey's is still *the* "Life of Wesley;" yet authors would seem to be simultaneously inspired with a desire to supplement if not to surpass it. Since the publishing season of 1870 commenced, we have had two versions of the famous preacher's life and labours, compiled respectively by the Rev. T. B. Wakeley and the Rev. Dr. McClintock. A work on "John Wesley's Place in Church History," by R. Denny-Urlin, M.R.I.A., of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-Law, has also appeared; and a "Life of John Wesley," in one volume, by Miss Julia Wedgewood, is announced. And it is only a few months since we were presented by Mrs. Oliphant with her two volumes of "Historical Sketches of the Reign of George II.," in which she has drawn the portrait of Wesley preaching, early in his career, but in the old familiar wig. Mrs. Charles, too, in her "Diary of Mrs. Kitty Trevylyan," has also brought forward the great preacher, but "small man, rather thin, with the neatest wig," at a date when Wesley was a denouncer of wigs. So that it would seem that the popular mind cannot disassociate Wesley from his wig; and it would further appear, from those recent proceedings at Burslem, that Wesley's wig is regarded by not a few as "his blessed wig."

TABLE TALK.

THE COURT OF CHANCERY, in administering an estate in its care, has ordered the sale by auction of the celebrated Felton portrait of Shakspeare. The picture will be brought to the hammer at the Messrs. Christie's rooms, on the 30th inst.; and doubtless there will be a very spirited competition among collectors for the possession of this unique work of art. This portrait is believed to be that from which Droeshout

made his engraving—the first published likeness of the great poet. It is the size of life, and is painted upon a wooden panel; but the ravages of time have left little besides the countenance for us to judge of the poet's appearance by. However, the numerous engravings made from it—it is presumed—make a description an easy matter. This portrait of Shakspeare is what is known to artists as a "three-quarter face," with the body full, or nearly so. The poet wears a dark coat, with an ornamental striped trimming upon it; and this surmounted by a huge stiff Elizabethan collar rising at the back, half-way up the head. In this portrait, the forehead of the poet is represented as of exaggerated height; the hair is long, and slightly waved; and the front part of the head at the top is bald. There are also a moustache, and a fringe of hair beneath the under lip, but not extending down the chin. On the back of the panel is an inscription, in ancient characters—"Gu. Shakspeare. 1597. R. B."—which points to Richard Burbage, his associate—who was both an artist and a player—as the painter. To the first engraved portrait—whether from this original or not cannot now be settled satisfactorily—Ben Jonson supplied the well-known lines—

"This figure that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakspeare cut;
Wherein the graver had a strife
With nature, to outdoe the life.
O, could he but have drawne his wit
As well in brasse as he hath hit
His face, the print would then surpasse
All that was ever writ in brasse!
But since he cannot, reader, looke
Not on his picture, but his booke."

There has been much controversy as to whether there is any original portrait of Shakspeare in existence. It seems very likely that the poet sat either to Richard Burbage or John Taylor, both contemporaries and friends. Martin Droeshout's engraving appeared as a frontispiece to the folio edition of the Plays, 1623. And we have the undeniably genuine testimony of Ben Jonson to the likeness it bears to the poet. There is, however, another portrait, which was engraved by J. Payne, and appeared as a frontispiece to the Poems (12mo edition), in 1640. This may have been imitated from the Felton portrait about to be sold, as in features it almost exactly resembles Droeshout's engraving; but the head is turned a different way. The dress is also

different, the poet wearing a cloak over his right shoulder, and in his left hand he holds an olive branch. But, as only the face remains in a state of good preservation in the Felton portrait, it is impossible to discover these details. To this engraving of Payne's were appended the following lines:—

"This Shadowe is renowned Shakespeare's? Soule
of th' age—
The applause? delight? the wonder of the Stage.
Nature her selfe was proud of his designes,
And joy'd to weare the dressing of his lines.
The learned will confess, his works are such
As neither man nor Muse can prayse to much.
For ever live thy fame, the world to tell
Thy like no age shall ever paralell."

ANOTHER CELEBRATED PORTRAIT of him who wrote "not for an age, but for all time," is that distinguished as the Chandos. It may be of interest to some of our readers who are curious in Shakspearean matters to learn that, at an old-fashioned tavern, situate in a narrow lane near the Strand, there is a waiter who bears a very striking resemblance to this portrait of the poet. Indeed, it is so like him that he might almost be supposed—leaving out the consideration of age—to be represented in it. The *sobriquet* of "Shakspeare" has been earned for him by this undoubtedly strong resemblance he bears to the great Bard; and I am informed that the frequenters of the tavern rarely call him by any other—and less sacred—name.

THE PARIS CORRESPONDENT of a morning journal gives a lively description of the expense attendant upon visiting the Easter races on the Bois de Boulogne. Six pounds was the sum charged by the livery-stable keepers of Paris for a one-horse carriage for the journey there and back, which was tolerably extravagant—even for Paris. The toilets of the ladies were many-hued and very costly, and "Our Own Correspondent" happily describes these fine garments as "really the *go-to-meeting* clothes" of their fair owners.

ANY MISHAP to a railway engine is, happily, not of frequent occurrence. As the writer of this paragraph was travelling up to town on the North-Western line, on the 18th inst., an accident of this nature took place, which presents two noteworthy features. The train was a fast one—not making any stoppage between Blisworth and Willesden, a distance of about fifty-five miles. All

went well till we reached the Boxmoor station. We were going at the rate of about forty-five miles per hour, when suddenly, immediately after passing the station, a cloud of dust and gravel came beating in at the windows. The train was pulled up by the driver in an incredibly short space of time. Of course, everybody got out on to the line, and began to ask of everybody else what was the matter. They soon discovered that a large piece of iron was hanging from under the engine, and, ploughing up the ground, had caused the shower of gravel we felt. Forthwith the driver and stoker set to work to mend the broken part; and the former, a North-country man, called loudly to his companion to "git him oot that there tommy-bar." A huge bar was produced, and the driver punched and poked at the offending piece of iron until he got part of it off. He then tied some rope round the other loose piece, and we proceeded—after half an hour's delay—quietly on our journey. After going some four hundred yards we were again stopped, and the poking and punching operations resumed until the other loose piece came off. This part of the engine—which, in reply to inquiries, was vaguely termed "one of her springs" by the stoker—seemed useless, as we got to Euston very well without it. The questions suggested by the affair were these. To what extent are the drivers of engines skilled machinists? How much may be taken away from an engine without injuring it? Ought officials to be angry with passengers for asking a question or two on subjects of life and death interest to them? Another very curious point was that involved in the conduct of the passengers. When the train was stopped the first time, everybody jumped out, and remained on the line to witness the operations of the driver with his battering-ram. On the second stoppage, not a single person got out, though there was a delay of some ten minutes. How powerful is the influence of use! Probably even railway accidents are not very alarming—when one is used to them.

A CORRESPONDENT: In an article in your "Table Talk" (No. 111, Feb. 12), the "Sandringham bouquet" is mentioned as being probably the latest signification given to the word "bouquet." If I thought of it at all when the Sandringham bouquet was

pictorially represented in the *Illustrated London News* some weeks ago, I have no doubt I should have thought so too; but, happening shortly afterwards to read Whyte Melville's "Autobiography of Captain Digby Grand," in "Fraser" for 1852, I found "bouquets" of "pheasants" spoken of in page 403 of the April number. It is probable that even then the application of the word was not original; but, at all events, it is now eighteen years old. Perhaps Mr. Whyte Melville can say where he got it from.

ONE WOULD HAVE IMAGINED that the word "linger" had long been in general use. It is, indeed, often found in Shakespeare, and is used three times in the English Bible. It comes from a Teutonic verb, signifying to prolong; although it has been suggested that it is simply a variation of the word longer, and means to make the time longer in doing a thing. Whatever its derivation, it is a household word, and one of good repute. And yet, at one time, it would seem as though it were a word that must be relegated to the category of Oxford slang; for, in a rare poetical work, called "*Æsop at Oxford*," published in the year 1709, is the following verse:—

"Newland the beadle looked askue,
And taking more than was his due,
As double fees were stated—
Cry'd 'Sir, joy to you in your gown;
You may now *linger* round the town,
For you're matriculated.'"

And to the emphasised word "linger" there is this foot-note:—"An Oxford word for loitering," as though its use were peculiar to the students of that university. Dryden's "Fables" had been published ten years before this "*Æsop at Oxford*," and the poet has this couplet:—

"'Tis long since I, for my celestial wife,
Loath'd by the gods, have dragg'd a ling'ring life."

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CHAPTER IX.



THE
D i p
c h e s t e r
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I t w a s

a great honour, and he was delighted that it had been paid to him. In the course of that banquet, however, he thought he could best recommend himself by bringing round the conversation, in a complimentary way, to the "fracash"—so he styled it—which had taken place that morning. "And, indeed," he said, "we are all glad of it down there; for that Hunter wanted taking down a bit—always bragging of this thing and the other, and of his money—of which he is close enough."

The Duke was listening. "And this young lady, Dr. Fearon," he asked, "who was she?"

"Oh, the actress, my lord Duke, Miss Lydia Effingham—a fine handsome woman, that's turning half the young fellows' heads in the place. We can't blame Mr. Charles, after all."

"Indeed!" said the Duke, with some astonishment, looking over at Charles.

The lady turned to him with some scorn.

"This is like a dramatic surprise out of one of their plays. We shall begin to understand it all by and by."

"It was merely an accident," said the young man, earnestly. "I was passing through the fields, and came upon the scene at the very moment. I could have made no *appointment*—you must see that."

"I really cannot say," replied the young lady, haughtily. "I don't understand this sort of things."

When the ladies went up, the doctor, feeling that it was a point upon which he was very strong, brought the subject back again.

"I don't think Hunter will take any notice. I hear he says Mr. Charles is too young, and that he would make himself ridiculous. But I must say, my lord Duke, the actress is worth it in every way—the finest woman you ever saw in the whole course of your life."

"I have seen her—we have all seen her," said the great man, with dignity. "I can hardly join in all that high commendation. Is she drawing in your town?"

"Oh, Haggerston is making money out of her; the place is half full every night."

"Half full! that can hardly pay," said one of the gentlemen.

"Lord bless you, sir, yes; it keeps going, you know, when there's about twenty people scattered about the house—at least, there's a little loss; but benefits and bespeaks bring it up."

"How long," asked Mr. Benbow, abruptly, "does this engagement go on?"

"Oh, as long as it pays, Mr. Benbow, Mr. Haggerston told me; and he means to work her out so long as there's a sixpence in her." The doctor was a very awkward gentleman, as it has been seen.

"She's coming out in Haller to-morrow night, with Haggerston as the Stranger,"

cried the young man, forgetful of everything in his eagerness. "Only fancy! It seems like a sacrilege, having to play with a ruffian of that sort! Why, it will be a burlesque, and chill every feeling of poetry and sentiment in her. How can she be expected to throw herself into the part, with a coarse fellow of that kind before her? How can—"

"No more wine, Duke?" said his father, abruptly; "then we may join the ladies."

CHAPTER X.

THE next morning the august ducal party went away, in solemn state. Great benefactions were distributed, almost regal in their magnificence; and the exact figure was known in Dipchester before the day was over. Mr. Benbow was calm, and appeared satisfied.

"You must wait at home, Charles," he said, "in case that fellow should come out here to look after you. You are clever enough to deal with him, whatever purpose he may have in view. Fighting, of course, is laughable; especially with a fellow of that sort. If he is insolent, give him another thrashing and kick him out. In fact, if I were to advise, I would try and bring it to that. No man, by whatever bluster, could get over a double beating. I am driving to the agent's house, to look over the books."

This was delightful: this absence was certain for three or four hours. He could seize the opportunity; but then, something whispered to him, like Sir Lucius, "Your honour, your honour!" He was a gentleman, and certainly not inclined to sacrifice the credit of his family. Better still, should he not abstain until evening? when he must see the divine Haller or die—*i.e.*, be miserable.

He waited in, therefore, all the morning; but Mr. Hunter never came. He was, then, going to take no notice. Young Benbow was a mere boy, and beneath his contempt. He was not going to get into a quarrel about a mere strolling actress. And so the nine hours' wonder dropped there. But it was a long, weary, dragging time.

In the afternoon Mr. Benbow senior returned—his face smooth, his air calm and cheerful, though the agent's books, &c., had not been very satisfactory. Money would have to be got in the market to defray the heavy cost of the recent entertainment. It was screwing and pinching, and fresh encumbrances; and it was wonderful he was not anxious. But it was so much money on

zero. That figure would surely turn up: he had covered it again and again. Only wait: it was coming now.

Towards night, Mr. Benbow—who, when alone, often ate his meal standing—partook of a frugal repast. After he had snatched a few scraps he withdrew into his own study, where, with his arms out, he plunged into the angry billows of papers and business. It seemed a little curious that he should exercise no jealous watch over his son, who was not a little surprised at this indifference, and who, leaving word that he was "gone out for a stroll," set off with exultation, and in full dress, for Dipchester.

As he got to the town, the sight of the coarsely-done posters with—"Renewed Triumph! Great Success! First Night of 'Guilty Love and Christian Forgiveness; or, the Stranger'"—country managers are fond of thus intensifying the titles of too familiar plays—made his heart flutter. A great band of red letters, looking like a belt of gore, told the world that Mrs. Haller was to be sustained by the "unique" actress, Miss Lydia Effingham; while Mr. Haggerston, for this night only, would give his great impersonation of the Stranger. He hurried on, fearful of being late; reached the little, old-fashioned house, which, though lit up, to his wonder and indignation, had a sort of illuminated desertion.

He entered. It was a very thin house indeed. Five or six people in the boxes, a dozen or so in the pit, and what seemed scattered videttes all through the galleries. A kind of solemn, cavernous declamation was travelling through the house; and Charles saw a stout gentleman, in a high-collared green frock coat, and with cape and brass buttons and hunting boots, sitting down on a long box covered with green cloth, and indulging in his sorrows. Mr. Haggerston seemed to address his remarks with equal impartiality to different persons in the house, and took note of Mr. Charles Benbow as he entered. The latter paid him the courtesy of sitting down for a few seconds and listening; and, looking round the house, saw that Mr. Hunter was also present, in a box close to the stage. Charles presently rose, full of impatience to be with her whom he so passionately loved, and who, from Mr. Haggerston's remarks, was not to appear for some time. He went round and tapped at the door in the box-lobby, which led on to the stage. It was

opened by a villager, the same who wore Mr. Haggerston's state livery on the occasion of a "command night."

"All right," said Mr. Charles, and advanced; but the door was kept nearly closed.

"Can't come in, sir. No one admitted behind the scenes."

"Nonsense!" said Charles. "You know me—there, let me pass."

"Can't indeed, sir; I'm very sorry—against the rule."

"I'll complain of you to Mr. Haggerston, and get you punished for your impertinence. Go and tell him that I am here."

"It's 'is horders," said the villager.

"His orders! nonsense. Here—" and the usual convincing syllogism in the shape of five shillings was laid down.

"Indeed, sir," said the man, in a low voice, "he said particular I wasn't to let you pass. But he is off now, and you can speak to him, sir."

"What's this?" said the Stranger, roughly; "who is this trying to force their way behind my scenes?"

"Mr. Haggerston, is this impertinence directed by you? What is over you to-night?"

The manager, in his green coat and boots, stood in the doorway.

"Young sir," he said, "I can't have it. The regulations of my theatre must be enforced. That is to say—ah, how d'y'e do, Mr. Hunter?"

That gentleman was behind, listening with an engaging smile.

"I wanted to speak to you, Haggerston," he said.

"Certainly, Mr. Hunter, if you have business with me; but I can't turn my 'hind scenes' into a lounge for all the idle young men of the place."

"Let me pass at once," said Mr. Benbow; "turn me out if you dare. I wish to speak to Miss Effingham. Lay your hand on me, one of you! I gave this gentleman a lesson yesterday."

There was something in his manner, as well as in this reminder, which had its effect. He pushed by them both, and was beside the lovely Mrs. Haller in a moment, pouring out his complaint.

"The man is mad," he said. "What can be the meaning of this insolence? I suppose he wants to take part with that low Hunter."

"I can explain it," she said, "more simply. It is directed against me. *Your father was with him to-day.*"

"I see. The venal wretch has been bought. Never mind, I can despise him."

"He has been rather strange in his behaviour to me also, and—"

"What! has he dared—"

Mr. Haggerston was now before them.

"This won't do at all, Mr. Benbow. I don't, of course, want to make confusion 'hind scenes"—a favourite word of his—"by turning you out; but, understand, I won't have it again. And you, too, Miss Effingham; I trust *you'll* conform to the regulations, and not be encouraging the young men of the place to come here. The engagement is not so profitable to me as to entitle you to take such liberties."

"You low fellow, don't dare to speak to this lady in that style, or I'll give you a lesson—"

"Take care, sir," said Mr. Haggerston, clapping his hand on his stage sword. "No bullying to me, sir. Raise your hand to me, and I'll have the police."

"Hush," said Miss Effingham, "I see what all this means, and will simplify the matter immensely. I know the whole reason of your behaviour to me and to this gentleman, and can save you a great deal of trouble. You wish to end my engagement."

"I don't say that, ma'am. It has turned out most unremunerative to me, but—"

"Then we shall end it. When you please. Now—on the spot. Give out after the play that it is the last night of the engagement."

"Oh, that will hardly settle it," he said; "I ought to have some indemnity for what I have lost by it. But you are too hasty, Miss Effingham. I don't mean to go quite so far as that."

"But I do. He is afraid," she said, with a smile, to her lover, "that those who set him on in this matter may not be so liberal in their intentions as to cover all loss in the affair."

"Leave all that to me," said the young man, eagerly. "I am witness. I heard him agree to it—indeed, he proposed it."

Mr. Haggerston was furious. But the audience were growing impatient, and the Stranger and Mrs. Haller had to go on. Charles went into the boxes, and looked on, enraptured. He thought she never played so magnificently, and that she was playing

to him. Perhaps she was. The sight was too short, and he was grieved when the play was done.

He walked home with her—her friend keeping close to them. He told her that this brought matters to a crisis, and he was not sorry for it. "It is I," he said, "who am the cause of this. Not only honour, but simple justice, requires that I should stand by you. There is no compliment in the matter. I am yours for ever and ever. We must look the thing in the face: difficulties are gradually encompassing us; and this night settles our destiny. You must decide—oh, you must! You are thrown on the world. It is idle opposing me; for I shall follow you wherever you go, even if I ruin myself with my father. Better now make me some promise—agree that you will be mine; and then I shall agree to obey you in everything, and be guided by you."

She paused, and thought a moment.

"I have wished to save you from this, but it is not my doing. Your father has hurried on whatever is to happen now. You must at least consent to these few days' interval. I must think—ponder it over, before a decision. You would despise me yourself if I took any important step without deliberation. In the morning I shall tell you."

"No, no, no! I am going in the morning, and I must know now."

She shook her head.

"Come here in the morning before you go, and then you will learn my final determination. You will grant me this little delay, will you not? It is for your good—all for your good. Indeed it is. I like you too well to let you ruin yourself; and, if we must yield to the inevitable, let it be borne without mischief if we can."

"I care not what may happen so that I shall have you."

"Oh, you little know—you have not been tried yet. Once let your father *really* exert himself in this matter, and you will find yourself weak before him. You know you will. You cannot deny it. He is not alive yet to the danger; but, if he were to set himself seriously to *crush* you—you without means, money, power—what *could* you do?"

Her foolish boy looked a little scared at this picture.

"Crush me! But he would not. He likes me. When he sees my heart is set on

this matter, I know—I am sure—he will give way."

"What! and allow you to marry an actress instead of a duke's daughter! Ah, you know it will be hard to resist him. Never mind; we shall see in time. You shall know it from me in the morning."

CHAPTER XI.

IN the morning the young man set off, splendidly equipped, money in his purse, and more promises for the future.

His father was very kind, and he was touched by the kindness; so much so that he felt not a little ashamed of his selfishness.

"After all," he thought, "there was no hurry. It might never come to anything." Meanwhile he could be rapturously happy for the time; never looking forwards or backwards; giving himself up to the exquisite dream; and reckless of the consequences. He was in a sort of dog-cart; and, when he got to Dipchester, he stopped at the inn, and walked away to see her who was now his all. As he entered the town he passed by a flaming orange poster, which was headed by the words which to him had the look of a talisman—the chime of the most exquisite music—"Theatre Royal, Dipchester;" and, feeling his very heart stirred, he stopped to read. He was filled with fury and amazement as he read—

"THEATRE ROYAL, DIPCHESTER.—Mr. Haggerston, while returning thanks to his patrons for their ever generous support, and while wishing to merit future favours by an unflagging zeal, begs to inform them that, as MISS LYDIA EFFINGHAM, with whom a costly engagement had been effected, has chosen, in an abrupt and unwarrantable way, to terminate her engagement, he has been compelled to secure, at a moment's notice and enormous expense, other talent; and has succeeded in catering for his friends the services of that eminent tragedienne, MRS. HECTOR MANFRONE, who will make her first appearance in 'The Murderer's Daughter.' Anne Redman (the murderer's daughter), MRS. HECTOR MANFRONE; John Redman (the murderer), Mr. Haggerston."

He was furious at this scandalous libel. The bill was still damp, and he indignantly tore it down and trampled it under foot. He then hurried away to the draper's shop. The young lady who admired him came to meet him.

"Oh, she is gone, sir!"

"Gone! Where? When? What does this mean?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, sir." She left this note for you."

And one was handed to him, which he tore open and read:—

"Thinking of your interest more than my own, I have thought it best to save you from a storm and a persecution which it would be cruel to ask you to face. I own to you that this is my reason, and this alone. You have not seen the world; you know not your own strength or weakness. The whole would end disastrously for us both. Should I be induced to invest all my love, my affections, in one whom I *do* like and admire, I might find myself deserted; that there, where 'I have garnered up my heart,' as they say in one of the plays, would prove a snare and unsubstantial support—not being able to trust myself or to trust you. Do not be angry. I have resolved to fly. I would not entail misery on you for the world. You would be persecuted to death. As I told you before, if you are constant, and, after a lapse of time, feel that you cannot live without me, perhaps. But it is right that you should know this, and I give it by way of warning: it will be better for you to have *nothing to do with me*. My life has another purpose than to be devoted to all that is loving or affectionate. *To that purpose I am bound to sacrifice everything—nay, turn everything*; and, if that purpose required it, I should have to sacrifice one I loved. Accept these words of warning, indeed extorted from me. They will make you hate me; but that would be better than your ruin. Do not try and find me again. You will, of course, if you try; for by love I know all difficulties are overcome. But I had rather that you should forget me.

"LYDIA EFFINGHAM.

"Think of this, too. What do you know of me—or who I may be? Whether this be my real name or no? Think of all these things, and see how hopeless the matter becomes."

He read this with a despair and wonder mixed. The arguments in it, as might be expected, had not the least effect on his mind—the appeal it contained not the least weight. It is strange how, with some minds,

always a different conclusion is drawn to that which is intended. The milliner's girl now read in his agitated face the whole story, and understood it as well as if it had been told to her.

It was not very difficult for the distracted youth to discover her track. It seemed to him that he was a miracle of cleverness when he bethought him of asking at the railway what special ticket she had taken. The clerk, one of histrionic tastes, was able to tell him. It was a through ticket for one of the great manufacturing towns. It would take her the whole day to get there. Something could be done by telegraphing.

His father knew an important person in that place; and to the son of this gentleman he telegraphed, begging him to watch the motions of a person who would arrive by that train.

All thought of the Duke and the Duke's daughter; all thought of his father's brilliant plans and hopes—those anxious dreams which the son well knew, at that very moment, were wearing away the father's brain, and very heart—all were forgotten in this infatuation; and, in a few minutes, he was seated in a train that took another direction to the one which was to have brought him to the palace of enchantment, of dazzling hopes, of wealth, power, and happiness.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. BENBOW, when his son had left him, had a light heart and a smoother brow. He became complaisant. The visit, he had settled, should last a fortnight; but the great potentate had made a significant speech, as he shook hands with his host:—

"It, indeed, rests with himself how long he shall stay."

Not that Mr. Benbow was wholly reassured. His confidence in the sense of the young man had been greatly shaken. He was, indeed, a little scared. For the young fellow had never been put to such a test before: had always seemed a sort of humdrum, average, *guidable* disposition, which, if it could not lead, could at least be led.

All this was alarming. Still, so far he had made all sure; and all would go well. He went into Dipchester at his leisure, and contrived to meet Mr. Haggerston. That manager was exuberantly obsequious.

"I think we managed well, sir—dissolved the engagement at a heavy sacrifice to me; but have saved your son."

"I hear you had a succession of bad houses," the other said, coolly. "I am sorry to learn it; but shall not forget what you have done, Mr. Haggerston."

"Yes, sir, we drove her out of the town—regularly routed her."

"What, has she gone?" And Mr. Benbow started. He thought there was some indistinct symptom of danger in both going on a journey at the same time. There must be some relation between the two movements.

Still, she was gone. She was out of his path—a poor strolling actress, obliged to earn her "bit and sup"—a scheming adventureress.

He knew boys well. The dazzling attractions of the Duke's "palace;" the charming girls; the attentions, and even flattery, which his son would meet with from some; above all, the Duke's daughter tendered for his acceptance; the state, the magnificence of Banff Castle—oh, he knew quite well. He himself had been love-sick once in his boyhood, when he had been passionately attached—he was ashamed as he thought of it—to a curate's daughter.

A curate's daughter! A prudent father, bless him for it, had behaved with stern cruelty—torn him from her savagely. It had been the blessing of his life. Where would he have been at that moment only for that?

Altogether he was content, and went home happy. *En attendant*, he busied himself with minor plots and schemes, which filled up his mind.

Thus two days went by, and a third day and a fourth; when he began to wonder that he had not received an account of the progress made. But he knew his son well. The lad had no business habits; answered letters fitfully; and scarcely ever volunteered them. Two days more had passed; then an entire week.

This silence actually gave him hope. Everything had been settled, and would burst on him with all the suddenness of completion. But then another week began to glide by; and, finally, on one morning he received a letter with the Duke's name outside, in the corner. It contained the following astounding news:—

"DEAR BENBOW—We have been expecting your son every day. I suppose we need not expect him further. His room has

been waiting for him all this time. Still, it is strange that neither he nor you should have written. Pray let us have a line to explain this singular delay, and believe me, yours sincerely—
"BANFFSHIRE."

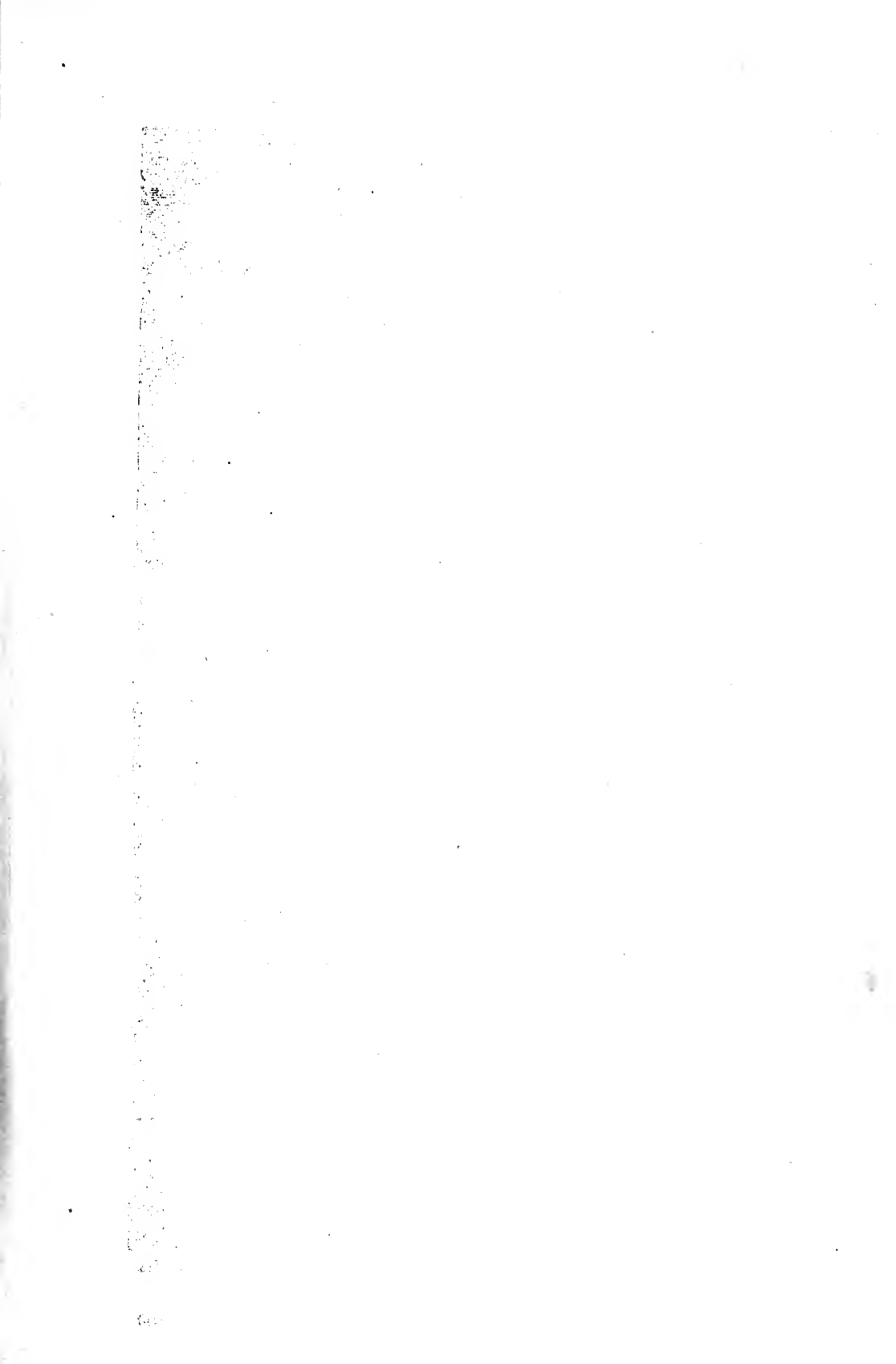
Mr. Benbow tottered—in fact, was nearer a stroke than ever he was in the whole course of his life. All he could gasp out was, "The scoundrel—the low, hypocritical scoundrel!—where is he? where is he?" No one could answer him this. He could gasp no other question, for his voice was failing him; but he was answered by another letter, which he saw lying on the table before him, and on which he pounced. He tore it open. It ran:—

"MY DEAR FATHER—You will be surprised to hear that I have not been at the Duke's after all; but I must tell you that important reasons may prevent me going to him—reasons which I know your good sense, kindness, and generosity will approve. I think it would be idle to enter on them now; more idle to present myself at Banff at all. I have thought the matter deeply over; and, after calm deliberation, have come to the resolution that it would be dishonourable to introduce myself into a house, or try and win the affections of a young lady to whom I could offer none in return. I scorn to do so; and I beg you will not ask me.

"Under these circumstances I have not been able to summon courage to go on with my journey; and submit to your better judgment if it would not be more for our advantage to think no more of the plan. Waiting your commands, I am, my dear father, your affectionate son."

He fell back speechless; crushed with disappointment—despair, rather—and rage. But his character had always been of the sort that rises with an emergency. In a moment he was coolly considering what was the next rigorous step he should take.

This fool, this child—infant, rather—who should be treated as such. Never mind; he who had never been baffled by strong men—men of intellect and genius—should not be opposed by a poor creature of that sort. Before an hour was out he had determined on his plans; and before the expiration of two hours he was on his road to that far-off manufacturing town from which his son had written.





Once a Week.]

[May, 1870.

"Do you forget, across the Mere
We rowed, and watched our own dear shadows

Reflected in the water clear,
With skies, and larks, and daisied meadows?" (p. 293.)

BY THE MERE.

DOWN where trim meadows softly sweep,
To view their shadows in the water,
Where many meek-eyed daisies peep

To welcome May—sad April's daughter—
I linger, silent and alone,

The evening shades around me stealing,
Here by this well-known trysting stone,
Dim secrets to myself revealing.

At noon I left the weary town,

All clad in holiday array;
In merry mood I've wandered down
Where sweetly blow the flowers of May.
At a quaint little country inn

I ordered tea and drank my sherry;
Then memories stirring me within,
At times I felt both sad and merry.

While thus in philosophic mood—

The past and present slowly weaving,
I mused on things of hoped-for good—
On things stored up for future grieving:
On life and love, and foolish days
When life was love, and love meant living:
Oft smiling when, as through a haze,
I pictured all my sad misgiving.

You know those happy afternoons

So long ago—so long ago—
The winds went singing pleasant tunes

As we were wandering sweetly slow;
A clerk on eighty pounds a-year—

A noble-born and scornful beauty—
I full of purposes unclear—

You, eloquent on wealth and duty.

Do you forget, across the Mere

We rowed, and watched our own dear shadows
Reflected in the water clear,

With skies, and larks, and daisied meadows?

And when they moved as moved the stream,

Behold, they seemed to twine together;

We whispering, as in a dream—

So we, through calm and stormy weather.

Westward the glow began to wane,

The happy moon rose high and higher;

Arm-linked we wandered down the lane,

My heart filled with a secret fire.

Here on this spot where now I stand

We said "Good-bye;" with tender pity

You went along—a merry band—

I caught the last train to the city.

Poet-like I wrote some verses fine—

'T were fitting I your charms should number—

Enraptured, I deemed them half-divine—

Last week I found them 'mid some lumber.

No doubt you're quite as fair as then,

Your eyes as blue, your face as pretty,

Although I do not care to pen

Rose-coloured sonnets, wise and witty.

We met again where shells and sands

Await the glad embrace of ocean.

We smiled and bowed; then, shaking hands,

Passed on amid the crowd's commotion;—

That's years ago: in last week's *Times*

I saw your wedding duly noted.

I told my wife, who read the rhymes,

I wrote for you when "your devoted."

Well, let us keep a noble name,
Each in the place ordained by duty:

I, slowly working up to fame;

You, as a famous country beauty;

You, free from envy, care, and strife,

Smiling around each peasant's cottage;

I, with my little ones and wife,

Contented with our humble pottage.

FLOATING A FINANCE.*

BY LITCHFIELD MOSELEY.

IT was the 10th of April, '64.

"Nobbles, I want you to do me a favour," said Smasher, as I was sitting in a grim city chop-house, disposing of some unknown animal fibre and vegetables.

Smasher was a genius who lived on his wits, and didn't fatten. He had been a clerk, a soldier, a policeman, an omnibus time-keeper, a reporter, a sheriff's officer's assistant, a checktaker at a cheap theatre, a supernumerary at ditto, a temperance lecturer, a brewer's collector, the outside agent of a photographer in the New Cut, and a bounding Bedouin of Bessarabia at Astley's.

"Well! what is it?"

"Nothing particular. I want your name to a bill for fifty pounds, that's all."

"Oh! that's all. Smasher, have you been drinking, or are you mad?"

"Neither. Don't be alarmed; I'll explain all directly. Eating—eh? Lucky fellow! It's well to be you. Now, if you were a Christian you'd say, 'Sit down, eat, drink, and be happy.'"

Acting on this hint I gave the order, and Smasher was soon deep in roast mutton and onion sauce.

"I have a scheme," he said, "that will make my fortune. Nobbles, I am going to float a Finance Company!"

"A Finance Company?"

"Ah! you may laugh, but it's an easy thing to do; the public mind is ripe for speculation, and they'll swallow anything. All I want is a little money. I've prepared everything: obtained directors, bankers, auditors, and solicitors; picked up a needy M.P. to act as chairman—terms, two guineas a time and sherry; and an Honourable—who was kicked out of an Irish regiment for swindling—at half the price. He's outside now, and wants a dinner as badly as I do."

I wouldn't take the hint, thinking if I did I should probably have to pay for a meal for all the directors.

* As read by Mr. J. M. Bellow.

"It's only a trifle I want, to advertise the affair; but we are all of us such an awfully hard-up, needy set, that although we've scraped and scraped, begged, borrowed, and disposed of everything to a relative who advances money on deposits, our paid-up capital only amounts to two pounds ten shillings; and what is the use of fifty shillings? However, as managing director, I've hired the top attic of a house in Vernon-street, Mayfair, and paid a fortnight's rent in advance—I looked so seedy they wouldn't trust me without—and the other men whose names figure here (barring the M.P.), and who originally hailed from Gray's Inn-lane, Lisson-grove, Badger's-buildings, Newington-butts, and other unaristocratic slums, have followed my example"—here he opened a roll of paper—"so that I flatter myself the affair looks genuine. See here, I have styled it 'The Great Cosmopolitan Financial Corporation (Limited). Capital—Five Millions, in 50,000 shares of £100 each. It is not contemplated to call up more than £3 10s. per share.' That's the way to bait the hook, and make purchasers rise."

"Excuse me, Smasher, but that seems a large capital."

"Of course; so much the better. It's a mere question of figures, and two or three additional noughts—nothing in themselves—look vastly imposing on a prospectus."

"Very true, Smasher; they do look imposing."

"Good," he said, laughing as he resumed.

"DIRECTORS.

James Silvertongue Hardup, Esq., M.P., Foodles Club, S.W. (Chairman).

The Hon. John Bouncer (late H.M. Horse Marines), Bog Hall, Fenn County, Ireland (Vice-Chairman).

I. Brysk Cutaway, Esq. (Director of the Madagascar Tallow Mines (Limited), The Rookery, Westminster.

A. S. Windle, Esq. (Chairman of the Aerial Steam Navigation Company (Limited), 460, Bolter's-court, Old Jewry.

Willoughby Vere de Flashman, Esq., Victoria-street. M. le Comte de Rougetnoir, Leicester-square, and Baden-Baden.

Bubbleton Smasher, Esq., 71, Vernon-street, Mayfair (Managing Director).

"We have fifteen directors, with power to add, &c.; but that's merely a sample. 'Bankers: The Bank of both Hemispheres, Messrs. Sloper, Golightly, & Co. Solicitors: Messrs. Pluckem, Fleece, & Bully. Temporary Offices: Three Gulls-court, Throgmorton-street.' The prospectus goes on

to state—'That the company is formed to carry on the ordinary and extraordinary business of a finance and credit association—viz., discounting without inquiry, making advances to English and foreign railways and contractors; providing funds to float anything that may turn up; paying interest for deposits at call, and lending them out at fixed periods of, say three, five, or seven years.'"

"Is that a safe course to pursue?" I asked.

"Well, that's *rather* difficult to answer. It's perfectly safe unless anything happens; but many associations of this kind do it."

"Oh!"

"Fact! You see without risk they couldn't pay the dividends they do. The plan is this—easy as A B C—they lock up every farthing they possess, charging nominally a high rate of interest—whether it's paid or not is immaterial; but it's calculated regularly as if it *was* paid, and the dividends come out of capital, the general rule being to make a call of, say five pounds per share, to pay a dividend of, say five shillings."

"Yes; but that cannot last."

"True! nobody behind the scenes expects it to last; but that's one of the many secrets of English finance. Now, Nobbles, fifty pounds will advertise us for one day, and then the applications and deposits will roll in; add your name to this—the M.P. has done so already—and I'll make you a present of fifty paid-up shares. Old Mo' Levy will cash it."

He went to the door and whistled; whereupon a snuffy-looking Jew shuffled in.

"Mo," said Smasher, "this gentleman will oblige us."

"Ah! thatsh right ma tear. Vot'sh the shentlemansh name?"

"Nobbles."

"Nobblesh ish a goot name."

"Excuse me, Smasher—I said nothing of the sort."

"But you intend to; it's all the same. Come, come, you're too sharp a man of business to throw away a golden chance."

Dazzled by his words, I signed the bill.

"There you are, Mo'; and now do your part."

"Ah! Mishter Smasher; yer see, monish is very tight jusht now, sho I must have schent per schent for it. I wouldn't ask yer no interesht votever, but I vill take my

Solomon oath I shall have to borrow de monish of a friend; and sho, if the company should prove a success, I shall expect a pull out of it. Mind, thatsh a pargain?"

"All right, Mo'; come along." And, taking his arm, Smasher departed.

Three days later, the Cosmopolitan Financial Corporation (Limited) was brought out, and applications for shares poured in. In a week they were allotted. I sold my fifty for double their par value, and retired from the concern. And the molehill became a mountain; and Bubbleton Smasher the grub developed into Bubbleton Smasher the butterfly, with a splendid villa at Twickenham; and in six months was M.P. for Great Bribington. He was toadied to in the city, and on 'Change was worshipped as an oracle by smaller men; and he, moreover, wrote a popular monetary work called "Smasher on Finance; or, How to Make a Fortune with Fourpence." He also took up with theatricals, and was lessee, under the rose, of the Blank-street Theatre, which he rendered famous for its ballet.

One day, after the company had been in existence a year, I was invited to a garden party at his villa. There was a goodly gathering of singers, musicians, and artistes, including Mdlle. Zephyrina de la Cordonière, and several of her sister dancers; but, to our surprise, the host was missing—indeed, he had not been home all night. Suddenly, breathless with excitement, arrived M. Octave Bassoon, conductor of the Blank-street orchestra.

"Ah! mes amis," he spluttered, "have you hear de terrible news?"

"No, no! what is it?" from fifty lips.

"A notice is affixé on de stage door dat the théâtre is closé."

"Eh! mon Dieu!" shrieked Mdlle. Zephyrina; "but our salaries, who vil pay our salaries?"

"Parbleu! I not know; dere is no von dere. De managere, de directeur, de treasurere, dey have all bolt."

Without waiting to hear more, the artistes hurried away. Then a Hansom drove up, and out leaped the Jew, Levy.

"Oh! Mishter Nobblesh, Mishter Nobblesh, here'sh a pretty shtart. Oh Holy Moses! I shall blow out my brainsh."

"Explain yourself," I said. "What *is* the matter?"

"Matter! vot's the matter? Itsh all over, Mishter Nobblesh; the companish bursh

up, and that schoundrel, Smasher, bolted last night."

I jumped into the cab and drove back at once to the city. In Fleet-street we nearly ran over a boy, who was shouting, "Here y'are, sir, s'cond edition! *Evening Standard*!! Collapse of the Cosmopolitan Finance Company! Flight o' the managing director! Panic in the city." In Cheap-side knots of excited men were gathered; and, as we turned into Throgmorton-street, I saw a great crowd in front of the house, and I knew that the Cosmopolitan had gone. As we alighted—

"Sad job this here, sir," said a journeyman baker to an old gentleman.

"Not at all, sir, not at all; I've been expecting it for months. If people will put their money into swindles, they must expect to lose it."

"Now, then, gentlemen, move on, if yer please; we can't have no crowds here," said a policeman on duty outside. "Come down, will yer? It aint no good flattening your noses agin them winder panes—d'ye hear?"

This was to two lads who had climbed up the railings, and were looking through the wire blinds.

"Oh, Mr. Pleeceman, sir," said one, "I've dropped a penny down the airy-grating. Please knock and ask for it, sir."

"Get along with you," said the official, as he cuffed the speaker.

The next day a meeting was held at the London Tavern. When I arrived, a fiery-faced gentleman was adjuring the shareholders "to take himmediate haction, to hindict the directors for perjury, conspiracy, burglary, and harson, and transport every man Jack of 'em; for," added he, "'ighway robbers wouldn't bear no comparison with 'em." Others were shouting, "Where are the directors!" "Are we going to begin to-day?" "Where's Bubbleton Smasher," &c.

At length entered, hat on head, Mr. Obadiah Taddy, a Quaker, and the only honest man on the board. Placing his hand on his heart, and bowing low, "Friends," he commenced.

"Hiss's's'h!" was the reply. Again and again he bowed. His lips moved, but not a word was audible; until, taking advantage of a temporary lull—

"Friends, will thee listen to me? ('No! no, no.') If time is of no object to thee,

it is none to me. I can wait here a week if thee thinkest it needful."

"Where's Bubbleton Smasher?"

"Verily, I grieve to inform thee that our respected friend, Bubbleton Smasher, departed yestermorn for America. ('Oh, oh, oh; where are the other directors?') I am fain to believe that urgent private business hath taken them to America also."

"Fellow-shareholders!" yelled Fiery-face, "will you submit to be humbugged in this manner?" ("No, no! Statement — Accounts!")

"I regret that I am unable to furnish thee with any statement, my brethren having taken the books with them; but, by inquiry, I find that £330,000 os. 4d. hath been invested, in fully paid-up shares of twenty pounds each, in the Arctic Circle Deep Sea Fisheries Company, the selling price of which this day is one penny each, the vendors paying brokerage. Another item of £189,000 hath been swallowed up in the ventures styled the 'Himalaya Mountains Gas Association,' 'The Siberian Brickfields (Limited),' and 'The Amalgamated Duffers' Life Assurance Company,' now in liquidation; also that our dear friend, the managing director, hath made use of £421,000 6s. 8³/₄d. of the company's funds. Moreover, that a most promising enterprise for converting Croydon into a fashionable watering-place hath, after an enormous outlay, failed, as the Act of Parliament to enable us to cut away the whole of Sussex, and a great portion of Surrey, hath been refused us. Farther than this, I have not an idea of our position; but friend Scorewell, the auditor, who is here, can give thee some information."

Said Mr. Scorewell, smilingly, "Gentlemen, I really must throw myself on your kind forbearance."

One of the shareholders immediately took him in hand.

"Are you the auditor of this company?"

"I am."

"Did you examine the accounts at the last audit?"

"No, certainly not; I merely ticked the figures Mr. Smasher showed me, and signed the report."

"What remuneration do you receive?"

"Two hundred guineas per annum."

"Who arranged the amount?"

"Mr. Smasher."

"With the board's concurrence?"

"I don't think the directors were consulted. I never knew them to be. Mr. Smasher *was* the board."

"Who prepared the report?"

"Mr. Smasher."

"Who examined the accounts?"

"Mr. Smasher."

"Who entered into the contracts?"

"Mr. Smasher."

"What did the other directors do?"

"Nothing. They attended once a month for an hour, chatted together, and consumed a quantity of sherry and biscuits."

"For which attendance they drew their fees regularly, I presume?"

"I believe so. Individually, they were not wanted; Mr. Smasher did everything."

"And everybody," yelled Fiery-face.

"And they did nothing else?"

"Nothing. I forget: sometimes they borrowed money of the company."

"And returned it again?"

"That I can't say."

"Who lent the money?"

"Mr. Smasher."

"And you knew of this?"

"Certainly."

"And said nothing about it?"

"Certainly not. It was not my business to interfere; I was engaged to examine the accounts."

"Which you never did examine."

"I supposed them to be right."

"Sir, you're a credit to your profession."

"Thanks. I hold testimonials from many eminent city firms."

"Did Mr. Smasher ever make you any presents?"

"Really, I forget."

"Did he never beg your acceptance of two thousand pounds as a recognition of your services?"

"He may have done such a thing, but I really cannot tax my brain about such trifles."

"Try and recollect."

"I must decline answering; for any other information I must refer you to Mr. Obadiah Taddy."

Then Taddy arose.

"Verily, friend Scorewell, thou art deceiving these people; thou knowest much, but thou thinkest it wise to hold thy peace."

"That is a falsehood, Mr. Taddy."

"Friend Scorewell, if thou givest me the lie, I shall be under the painful necessity of pulling thy nasal organ."

"Pull it, sir! Pull it! Oblige me by pulling it, sir!" And he thrust his face close to the Quaker's, who placed his hand gently on the other's shoulder.

"These gentlemen are witnesses you have assaulted me," exclaimed Scorewell; "I appeal to them to interfere."

"You wish us to interfere?" asked Fiery-face.

"Yes."

And in an instant the shareholders had swarmed over the directorial table like bees, seized Mr. Scorewell, and handed him bodily over the heads of the assembly, out of the door; when, coatless and hatless, he was chased by the whole body down the great staircase and into the street, where a London mob took up the pursuit, until he found refuge in a Hansom.

The room being quite empty, poor friend Taddy, deeming that a favourable moment had arrived to depart, put on his hat, and, collecting his papers, made for the door; when he was surrounded by the tide of returning shareholders, who, flushed with victory, were eager for another victim. In a second, his hat was knocked over his eyes, his spectacles smashed, his umbrella destroyed, his coat minus its tails, his papers scattered to the winds, and he himself spinning down the staircase—excited, out of breath—until, missing his footing, he rolled down the whole flight, coming into collision with a stout waiter who was carrying a tureen of turtle soup, the whole of which he received over his person. When he recovered his consciousness the shareholders were gone.

Two days later we were in Chancery.

MYSTERIES IN WASP LIFE.

IN an article in *ONCE A WEEK*, for November 7, 1868, I noticed some remarkable observations that had recently been made by German naturalists on bees. Professor von Siebold, whose investigations into the private life of those insects were specially noticed in that paper, has since been examining the life-history of certain wasps; and he has arrived at such marvellous, and—to non-naturalists—such almost incredible results, that, although the subject is somewhat of a delicate physiological nature, it is well deserving of a notice in our pages.

The kind of wasp on which the observations were made is one that is scientifically known as *Polistes gallica*; and it was selected

because it may metaphorically be said to live in a glass house—its nest consisting of a single comb, entirely exposed, and allowing the observer to follow all the actions of its inhabitants, and all the phenomena which take place in its cells. By various ingenious contrivances, the professor was able to compel these wasps to fix their homes wherever he chose, and even to make the nests movable, for the purpose of experiment, without alarming the inhabitants.

The nest serves both as a nursery and a habitation for the colony of the young wasps for an entire summer. In the autumn all the wasps, with the exception of a few isolated females, perish. These females were produced in the summer, and were fertilised in the autumn before the fatal period. They then fall into their winter sleep, and in the spring each wasp deposits her eggs in a few cells, which she constructs so as to form a small nest.

The new generation thus engendered are, up to the middle of summer, exclusively females; and those first produced are of very small size, in consequence of the mother being overwhelmed with domestic cares, and being able to supply them with only a scanty amount of food.

These small individuals are not, as was supposed, like the worker-bees, females arrested in their development; but, strange as it appears, perfectly developed females, full of eggs ready to be laid; and these eggs, proceeding from these little virgin wasps, just as invariably produce only males as the eggs of the original mother produce only females.

As soon as the original mothers have thus produced assistants, in the form of these little virgins, the nests rapidly increase in size, and the larvæ in the old cells are better fed, and are transformed into wasps as large as their mother. The new females thus produced from the well-fed larvæ at once take part in the labours of the colony. The nests are enlarged by new cells, which are speedily occupied by eggs laid by the active little virgins; and from these eggs are produced larvæ, which in due time (about the first half of July) are developed, as I before observed, into males.

It is evident, therefore, that in *Polistes gallica* the whole of the male individuals originate by what is termed *parthenogenesis* (or unfecundated eggs); or, in other words, the males have never enjoyed the privilege of having a father.

THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK III.—CHAPTER V.

AN AFTER-DINNER TALK.

“**B**Eg yer ludship’s pardon, but it’s twelve o’clock, and I’ve called yer ludship three times before,” said Malton’s factotum, as he opened the shutter of his lordship’s chamber, and drew up the blinds, letting in the bright sunlight. But his master was in no hurry to rise on the day following his unsophisticated declaration of his love for Mabel Despencer.

“Don’t make such a row,” he growled from under the clothes. The valet proceeded quietly to lay out his master’s clothes, sticking the studs into the snowy front of his shirt, and selecting a cravat from the heap of neckcloths in the drawer. Malton, waking slowly, lay idly watching him.

“Now put that away. I’m not going to wear that thing!”

“No, my lud.”

“And Jones—”

“My lud.”

“I wish to gad you’d wait till I have time to say—”

“Yes, your ludship.”

“Now, will you hold your stupid row!” continued his master, peevishly. “Pack my traps up. I’m going up to town to-day.”

“I always thought your ludship would be bored to death in a day or two here.”

“Then have the goodness to keep your thoughts to yourself. Bored! I’m always bored!” Malton added, with a groan. “If I don’t want a thing to come off, it always does. And if I do want it to come off, it’s a thousand to one against it!”

And, with the irritability of temper common to him on rising in a morning, Malton proceeded to dress very leisurely; but on this particular occasion he had no inclination to decorate the button-hole of his coat with a rosebud. He had not, as on the morning before, a lady whom he wished to captivate. After his abrupt but characteristic proposal—he would have been ready to run off with her there and then, had she not said him nay—under the old oak in Madingley Chase, Malton had not the pleasure or embarrassment of sitting *vis-à-vis* to the fair Mabel at dinner. A headache kept

her in her own room. After dinner, Miss Margaret rose from the table, leaving Sir Harold, and Robert, and Malton to themselves.

“You are not in your usual spirits, I think, Frederick,” said Sir Harold.

“Why, what makes you think that?” said Malton, quickly. Suspicion ever haunting the guilty mind. He almost thought Sir Harold had guessed the truth.

“Possibly,” said Robert, with the slightest sneer, “because we notice that your remarks have lost their usual vivacious tone. You don’t talk to-night.”

“I’m not going to stand for Parliament, you see,” Malton retorted.

“Luckily, Nature has given me a seat.”

“Has she not done that for all of us?” asked Sir Harold, laughing.

“Birth, I suppose, you mean,” observed Robert, in a sarcastic tone.

“I suppose I do. I did not make such use of a public-school education as you did, perhaps.”

Robert Mortimer bit his lips angrily.

“May I?” said Malton, raising his eyebrows, and looking interrogatively at Sir Harold, smiling at the same time at the manifest effect of his thrust.

Sir Harold nodded assent; and Malton opened his cigarette case, and, taking from it one of the slender rolls of tobacco, proceeded to light it at the candle near him and stick it in his mouth. A cloud of smoke soon surrounded him.

“P-u-f-f!” said Robert; “what a deal of smoke one cigarette makes.”

“Try a cigar yourself,” Sir Harold suggested to his brother.

“Presently I will, thank you. It is rather too soon after dinner for me.”

“Is it too soon?” asked the Baronet.

“By Jove!” said Malton, “it is never too soon for me to have a cigarette. I should like to smoke one of these little Turkish fellows between every course of my dinner.” And he handed his case of “little Turkish fellows” to Sir Harold for inspection.

“And very likely you would smoke half-a-dozen or so after your meal,” Robert observed.

“Certainly I should, and I do,” replied Malton, puffing away. “The tobacco in these cigarettes is six-and-twenty bob a-pound. They are good, I can tell you. Try one,” he said, holding his case out for Robert to help himself.

He declined the pleasure, remarking, "I do not think smoking hurts so much—"

"In moderation—in moderation, Robert," Sir Harold interposed.

"Of course, that is what I mean. A few pipes or cigars a day do not hurt. But brandy will ruin any constitution."

"Ah! brandy does play the deuce," said Sir Harold. "I know—"

"Brandy! what do you mean?" asked Malton, in his quick way, straightening himself, and sitting upright in his chair. "Me, I suppose."

"I thought a word of advice from—" Robert began.

"Exactly. Thank you; I'm sure I am awfully obliged for all your interest in my welfare."

"If I had thought—"

"You need not make any apology. You see the cap does not fit on the present occasion, at all events. If I were like some men I know, pegging away at S. and B.—"

"Peg, ah! Peg we used to call it."

Sir Harold had seen a few months' service in India.

"Pegging away at the brandy bottle all night, there might be something to talk about. But, so help me ged, since I've been at Madingley I have not touched it—at least, except on one morning, when my man told me your fellow saw him going upstairs with a bottle of soda and some brandy. I knew he'd have the impudence to carry the startling news to you at once. By the bye, Mr. Mortimer, I hate that fellow of yours."

"Do you," said Robert, contemptuously. "Perhaps you have not much reason for the dislike. Brady has been my faithful servant for many years."

During this little interchange of civilities between his brother and Malton, Sir Harold sat quietly sucking at the cigar he had just lighted. He would have interfered, probably, to prevent any very serious breach of decorum. Malton's candid opinion of the M.P., and the M.P.'s anything but candid opinion of Malton, Sir Harold had often listened to from each in the absence of the other.

"I shall go up to town to-morrow, I think," Malton said to Sir Harold, after a short interval of silence.

This was precisely the information Robert Mortimer wanted; but the expression of his face indicated neither curiosity nor surprise—

nor, indeed, common interest. He sat toying with a dessert knife. But he was not sharp enough to guess the real reason of Malton's abrupt departure from Madingley Chase. Sir Harold was much nearer the truth; but then he had been inspired to some extent by the whisperings of his sister, Miss Margaret.

"Oh, don't run away so soon," he said; "stay with us a day or two longer, if no more."

Robert waited to hear Malton's answer to this invitation to prolong his visit at the Chase. Having heard Malton decline it, in his quick decided way, he rose from the table.

"I have several letters to look through and reply to to-night," he said. "It is very likely I may be called to town in the morning. I will see you again before bedtime."

"We might go up to town together," said Malton, in good temper again—laughing at the mutual pleasure they would derive from each other's society.

"I shall be perfectly agreeable," said Robert Mortimer, as he left the room.

"For the first time in your life then," Malton said, in an under-tone.

"That's a fine foal of Cleopatra's this year. I saw her in the paddock yesterday," he said presently, to Sir Harold, who sat thoughtfully sucking his cigar. "I'll stand a couple or three hundred for him myself next year. He looks like making a race-horse, in my opinion."

"We shall see," replied the Baronet. "I never have had one of Cleopatra's worth anything yet."

"Let us give him a name," said the young man. "Peccadillo—Cleopatra, is it not?"

"Peccadillo—Cleopatra," repeated Sir Harold.

"Piccadilly—Pedagogue," said Malton, thinking aloud, and at the same time writing the names on the open page of his betting book spread out before him. "I like Pedagogue myself. What do you think?"

"Yes, Pedagogue is very well. Ask Mabel. She names my yearlings now, to her own fancy, before we send them to the sale."

"I don't know that Miss Mabel Despencher will name mine, though, if I ask her," said Malton, smiling rather grimly. "And this youngster is mine, you know, now; you'll save him for me. He's sure to race. Butler thinks as I do about him."

"Well, he may turn out well," said Sir Harold. "Time will tell us all about him. I shall not sell him to you until he does."

"Pedagogue," Malton continued, reading the name in his book. "The Marquis of Malton's Pedagogue, by Peccadillo out of Cleopatra. Dark blue, light blue hoops and cap. By Jove! I've a great mind to have your old colours when I start at the First Spring. Dark blue, light blue sleeves and cap—were they not?"

Sir Harold nodded assent.

"Ah! we're not Radicals, are we? like a certain gentleman who was here just now. Jove! I like blue; there's something Tory and honourable and all that about it. True blue. Queen and constitution for my money. I do hate a Radical as I hate the D——" draining a glass of Sir Harold's Madeira to the sentiment. "*Deus salvam fac reginam,*" as they say at Tudor."

"*Atque ecclesiam,*" said Sir Harold, laughingly supplying the omission.

"Oh! I don't trouble church much—except when I am here. Then I think a fellow ought—in the country, you know. When I get the alterations done at the Hall, and go to live there, I shall go regularly every Sunday—if only *pour encourager les autres* to do what is the thing."

"You have my example for it," said Sir Harold, who never missed the Sunday morning's service at Madingley Church.

"I'm no saint, and I know I'm not," Malton proceeded; "but I don't pretend to be one. And I dare say Mr. Robert's right when he insinuates I'm not very clever and all that, and I don't pretend to be; and when I was at Harrow I never could learn those cursed paradigms and declensions, and all that. By Jove! what a mare your Paradigm was. But, thank goodness, I've got my wits about me; and though I dare say I shan't ever speak in the House, I can vote right out true blue, and there is something in that." And at the end of his speech Malton helped himself to another bumper of the dry Madeira, and passed the bottle suggestively to Sir Harold.

Picking up another cigarette from the little heap he had emptied from his case upon the table, he lighted it, and resumed his studies.

"Pedagogue—Peccadillo—Cleopatra," he said, thoughtfully—"patra's, we might call him Patras. Which do you like better, Pedagogue or Patras?"

"Well, Pedagogue, I think," said Sir Harold.

"Then Pedagogue we'll call the rascal. The Marquis of Malton's Pedagogue. Dark blue, light blue hoops and cap. Or dark blue, light blue sleeves and cap. This is rather a settler, eh! Which shall I have?"

"Make your own choice, or ask Mabel and Margaret to help you."

Malton was rather getting over the loss of the lady, till he was again reminded of it by the mention of her name.

"No; I'll choose my colours for myself," he said. "You don't mind me having yours—I mean, you won't want them again?"

"Never!" replied Sir Harold. "My day is gone by."

"Dam!" said Malton, after a few minutes of very hard thinking, during which he had wrinkled his forehead into all sorts of strange puckers; "I don't know which to have now. Here goes!" he cried, taking a coin from his pocket. "This is the way to settle things. Heads, hoops; tails, body and sleeves." Poising the coin on his thumb-nail for an instant, he sent it spinning and twirling over and over up to the ceiling of the old room. Catching it cleverly as it fell, he brought it down on the table with a sharp clink. "Heads—hoops, by Jove!"

"The Marquis of Malton's bay or brown colt Pedagogue, by Peccadillo out of Cleopatra. Dark blue, light blue hoops and cap. It looks well on paper," he added, contemplating the leaf of his pocket-book.

"I'll make you a present of him," said Sir Harold, "if he turns out good for anything."

"Oh, thank you!" cried Malton, "he'll win the Derby for me. Peccadillo won it for you, and why should not his son do the same for me?"

"I hope he will. But don't back him till we've tried him. Cleopatra's never get above half a mile. He'll be nothing better than a half-miler, you'll see."

"I should like to take ten thousand pounds to two hundred of Flint about him now—twice over, if he'd do it. I think he he's sure to race."

"Take my advice and wait," said Sir Harold, sagely, as became a Nestor. "If a man backs a smart yearling, and it is at all lucky as a two-year old, he in all probability sees good hedging for his money."

"That's just what I mean to do."

"Yes," replied the Baronet, quietly, "of course; that is what they all mean. But of all the yearlings their owners think good for something now, how many will stand training? And of those that stand their preparation, how many are troubled with 'the slows?'"

"I've got half-a-dozen clinkers entered for the Derby, and I think I shall back them all round. One is sure to turn out well."

"I should not be in a hurry about it," said Sir Harold.

"I don't know—one doesn't always win by waiting."

"You know this, my dear boy," said Sir Harold, placing his hand affectionately on Malton's shoulder, "that you are very young, and not so well acquainted with the traps that are laid by scheming men to ensnare young men of fortune."

"I know one thing," said Malton, quickly, as resenting his guardian's advice or interference in his affairs, "I've got my wits about me; and it is strange if I do not get on as well as other people. It will take a sharp man to rook me, I can promise you."

"Well, well," said Sir Harold; "only pray be a little careful. You know, for your station in life, you are not rich, Malton; and I am very sorry you have taken to keeping a stud of horses in training. You will find out the expense before you've had many trainers' bills sent in to you."

"I'll make the stable pay in stakes, I'll bet you anything you like."

"Well, a bottle of wine, then; and you'll have to pay it. But, seriously, I regret your connection with the turf, and all that belongs to it. You will say I ought not to speak against it. I do so from a long experience. Gentlemen can't win. In the long run, it is at least ten to one on the bookmaker against the backer; and you will find it so. With the greatest caution, and the most exceptional luck, the gentleman owner may just hold his own. You can't afford to keep a large stud of horses, and back them for heavy wagers, unless they win a great deal oftener than you'll find they will."

"My luck at some things is good enough, and I think I can take care of myself pretty well all round," said Malton, lighting a fresh cigarette, and refilling his glass from the decanter. "But," he continued, "I am

always confoundedly out of luck just when I want most to be in with good fortune. Only to-day I made Mabel an offer of my heart and hand, which ought to tempt any girl. Besides, we've always been such friends, and I thought it was all right between us; for I'm sure she does not care that"—here the love-sick youth snapped his fingers in the direction of the door by which Robert Mortimer had left the room—"that for Charlie, and never did, and never will, I'll bet my life."

Sir Harold fidgeted about on his chair.

"I know you all think she does, but I know better; for I know her real mind on the matter, and she isn't going to marry Charlie Mortimer if——"

"I have written my letters, Harold; can't we get up a rubber?" said Charlie's father, advancing up the room. His footfalls had been unheard by either of the two occupants of the room. Robert Mortimer had an unpleasantly quiet way of opening and shutting doors.

Malton caught his cigarette in his lips as it was about to drop, and, seizing the poker, let his anger explode quietly over the embers of the wood log that the butler had put on the fire after dinner.

From the perfect composure of Robert Mortimer's manner as he asked Malton to go up-stairs with himself and Sir Harold and ask Miss Margaret to join them in a game at whist, it was impossible to discover if he had heard anything or if he had not. Malton had Miss Margaret for a partner; and his play certainly was not improved by the occurrence in the dining-room.

ORIENTAL GESTURES.

IT is no easy matter for one who witnesses, out of earshot, a colloquy between two or more Englishmen, to gather from their gestures any distinct notion of the purport of their conversation. An affirmative nod or a negative shake of the head exhausts the recognized vocabulary of British pantomime. But, of the various yet settled gestures of the East, each has its own distinct signification, and is the perfect symbol of an idea complete without any explanatory speech. This fact first impressed itself upon our mind under the following circumstances.

It was in the autumn of 1866. The cholera had disappeared from Turkey, but not yet from the ports of the Mediterranean; hence,

many of the regular passenger steamers were locked up in quarantine. The Cretan insurrection had just broken out; and the Turkish mail steamers were frequently called off the line by the Government, at an hour's notice, to convey troops and provisions to the Ottoman garrisons in that island. Thus it had happened to the steamer in which we had taken passage from Constantinople to Cavalla; and in her place another, which we will call the *Yildiz*, was substituted. She was a vessel that had been lying unemployed for some time in the arsenal, and was hurriedly got ready for sea to supply the emergency.

The dark blue uniforms of the officers showed that they belonged to the Imperial navy; and there appeared to be as many of them on board this little yacht-like craft as might have sufficed for a three-decker. However, in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom; and as, from the after-deck, we surveyed the row of gold-striped shoulders ranged upon the bridge, we felt that we were highly privileged in having so stout a bulwark of nautical science between us and shipwreck. And merrily the little clipper sped on her way; flitting past the Seven Towers—ill-favoured old giants scowling at opposite Kadekioi—all garish and glittering in the afternoon sun-blaze; distancing the San Stefano boat, with its crowd of backgammon-playing passengers; shooting by San Stefano itself as the west began to glow; and sharing the last flicker of fading daylight with the columns of the Tchekmidjé aqueduct, that glimmered like white ghosts in the fast-deepening dusk.

We now went below, and made demonstrations for food—which, are perhaps, the better impressed upon our memory from the fact of their having been for a long time ineffectual. We seated ourselves on the sofa at the end of the saloon, and bided our time; in the act of doing which we fell asleep. But our eyes were soon re-opened by the flicker of a light on the saloon table, round which four or five of the officers were clustered in earnest consultation, their befezzed heads bent over the chart, whose teachings they were fain to reconcile with the features of the dull slaty outline of Marmora Island, now distinguishable against the star-lit purple of the horizon. First one, then another, ran on deck, to return immediately and resume his inspection of the chart; and each one, as he left the table,

made a gesture—an unvarying gesture—which plainly betokened perplexity. The hand—held with the fingers pointing upwards, as if to poise a plate flat on their tips—was raised to the level of the temple; and then a short turn of the wrist was given, such as, if a plate had been on the fingertips, would have set it spinning. The movement seemed to tell its own tale; namely, that this distinguished body of gold-buttoned mariners had, in losing the daylight, lost their way also; although San Stefano light was still brightly visible astern.*

As we sat down again to wait the still delayed meal, the perfect uniformity of this gesture of the officers in their perplexity occurred to us. Had they been Englishmen in a similar dilemma, one might have rubbed his forehead, another might have scratched his poll, a third might have shrugged his shoulders; each undoubtedly would have performed the particular antic habitual to him on such occasions. But the Osmanlis were strict ritualists in their dumb-show, not varying jot or tittle one from the other.

While thus reflecting, and resolving to learn more of these arbitrary gestures—which it seemed contrary to reason to suppose could be limited to the plate-spinning symbol of perplexity—the promised dinner appeared.

By steering from light to light till dawn, and afterwards hugging the coast, the *Yildiz* pursued her voyage in safety—merely carrying away the jib-boom of a bombarde beating up the Marmora—and finally brought us safely to our destination.

On arriving we had noticed a small gun-boat in the port; but missing her when we came on deck, after going below to collect our scattered belongings, we inquired of an officer where she was. No verbal answer was returned—for Osmanlis are given to taciturnity; but our *interrogé* made a short, chopping motion with his right hand, held hatchet-wise, gradually extending it towards a headland about which still hung the smoke of the vanished craft. So we accepted this motion as the symbol of departure; and, a few minutes later, were fully justified in doing so.

* There is a recent parallel to this ridiculous incident. The government transport lent for the conveyance of the Emperor of Austria's horses and baggage to Jaffa, after hunting all about the butt-end of the Mediterranean, "could not find" that port; and was ultimately piloted to it by an English steamer.

The picturesque aspect from the sea of the little town of Cavalla—whose internal squalor was so familiar to us—caused us to linger on the deck, till we were called to a sense of what was expected of us by a hail from the bridge, where five officers stationed on that elevation were all making the same chopping motion with their hands—some in the direction the *Yildiz* was to go, thereby intimating an immediate start; the others towards the shore, whither we ought to have been moving.

Thus, before leaving the vessel, we knew perfectly how to express perplexity and departure in accurate symbolic language; though we should have been sorely puzzled at that time to have done so by word of mouth in the vernacular of the Osmanlis. And here, for further illustration of the definite signification of Oriental attitude and motion, we must change the scene.

Except in the largest towns of Turkey, the outer doors of the houses are never shut during the daytime in summer; and even in winter there are so many bright days—remiscences of autumn, foretastes of spring—that the inhospitable panel rarely bars the entrance of the visitor.

One summer's day, after the stereotyped midday meal of rice-soup, toned with a demulcent mixture of eggs and lemon, boiled meat, and baked tomatoes, we had retired to our summer parlour—a small room with a wooden divan along one side, on which, after the manner of the country, we were accustomed to take an afternoon nap. We had settled down in our usual orderly manner to this part of the day's business, and were profoundly engaged therein, when an unusual sensation caused us to open our eyes; and we saw that our right hand, which had been pendant from the divan, was grasped by two other hands—much be-ringed with diamonds—and was being kissed with effusion by their proprietress, who was on her knees beside the sofa. We were surprised, not being an object of female idolatry in a general way. That, however, was the lady's business; and we allowed her to go on. But she, almost immediately perceiving that we had awakened, began to heave and to sob, and finally to drop tears where she had bestowed her kisses. This was unpleasant; so, withdrawing our hand, and putting it to dry in our pocket, we rose to a sitting posture, and begged our fair visitor to get up and explain her business. Not a

bit. There she crouched, still sobbing and wailing, in a manner that awakened in us more anger than compassion. The adventure began to be annoying, for we had no clue to its *raison d'être*; and, as our visitor would not speak or move, we addressed her in terms which, though ungraceful, will, we trust, be deemed excusable, considering the aggravation and our imperfect command of the Greek language.

"Are you," we sternly asked, "a woman, or a *she-ass*?"

This, happily, was effectual. The lady at once rose, and seated herself on a chair. We beheld a woman of an age which does not court too close a scrutiny; but she was still handsome, and art supplied the deficiencies of nature. Once face to face with her, we pinned her to her business immediately. She was a widow—dangerous! we thought; she had one daughter; had betrothed her; at the betrothal had presented one of her rings to the pretendant; he had backed out of the transaction, and now would not give up the ring—*hinc ille lacrymæ!* Niobe, whose name turned out to be Polyxene Paraskevâides, had "invited" him to appear before the Turkish civil tribunal: would we, for the sake of Christianity—we own we could not see what that had to do with it!—would we attend the tribunal, and influence, through our friendship with the governor, its counsels towards the adoption of her view of her case? The proposal was very distasteful to us; but we felt that we should not care two buttons for the woman in the presence of a Turkish *Medjliss*, or council; while we were very uneasy at having so enterprising a dowager in our summer parlour all alone! To get rid of her, we consented at once. "To-morrow," we said, "at the *Medjliss* hour, we will be punctual."

Next afternoon we might have been seen toiling up the ill-paved main street—followed by an attenuated Hebrew, our dragoman—till we came to a long, forlorn-looking building, that would have made a serviceable barn had it been less dilapidated: it was the official residence of the governor of the province. Four Zaptiehs lounged at the wide door, through which we entered into a large lobby with an earth floor, worked into many holes by sweeping. The furniture consisted of a decrepit fire-engine, flanked with pikes and grappling-irons for pulling down houses, a mildewed carriage of Queen Anne's reign, and an old iron cannon. A few pri-

soners, with heavy chains, loitered about. We mounted a broad wooden ladder which did duty as a staircase; traversed the corridor above; and, raising the curtain which formed the door of the council-chamber, entered it, to meet the pleasant smile and welcome of the *Caimakam*. We then made our general salaam; the governor rose and advanced to meet us; the rest of the assembly rose merely. We seated ourselves on the divan next the governor, exchanged a salaam with him, and then with each one of the councillors. Polyxene was present, and also her daughter; both leaning their backs against the wall opposite to where we sat.

The *Caimakam* looked significantly at her, smiled at us, and shook his head. We thought we detected raillery in the gesture, and blushed; and were further disconcerted on catching at that moment the eye of a dervish, who shook his head and smiled too. However, we called to mind that we were there as a champion of Christianity, and we tried to look the part; but, when a fuzzy-headed Jew who was present shook *his* head and grinned, our bashfulness got fairly the better of us: we felt very small; and, our evil passions having for the moment the upper hand, we heartily wished that dogs might walk on the grave of Polyxene's great-grandmother. But reflecting, almost immediately afterwards, that the accomplishment of this wish would be fraught with little practical advantage to ourselves, we looked at our dragoman, who was "diagonally opposite," intending to address the *Caimakam* through his instrumentality. He shook his head too! *Il ne manquait plus que cela!* Here were we a target for the scorn of Jews, Turks, and Infidels, who were wagging their heads at us; while our own Hebrew dependant, who ate our bread, was following suit!

All eyes were now upon us; for there was, no doubt, something more of the *champion* of Christianity in our aspect than our inoffensive exterior was ordinarily wont to display; which our dragoman observing, he stepped quickly up to us and whispered in French—

"You should reply to the *Caimakam*, sir."

"Reply to what? He has asked nothing."

"No; but he shook his head to inquire how you were, and your face looked angry; and when Hussam and Mochon shook their heads to know why, it looked worse; and everyone thinks you are offended."

"But don't these people know what we have come about?"

"They have not an idea about it."

"Et moi qui croyais qu'ils s'en moquaient!"

Thus, our nervous susceptibility at the notion of being "chaffed" about the enterprising widow had led us to misinterpret the interrogative gesture—a short, sharp shake of the head, to the peculiar properties of which we had never before paid sufficient attention to enable us to distinguish it from the real derisive wagging of the head, which is a longer movement, and the oscillations slower, having a rolling quality befitting the sentiment which the gesture indicates.

Our self-possession restored, we proceeded, by means of a few commonplaces, to remove the momentary uncomfortableness which had arisen. The business of the council was going on in its usual desultory way. A writer was seated on the ground near Polyxene, taking down her deposition. As we went on chatting, we comprehended that the *Caimakam's* significant glance at her—which had unseated our equanimity, and which had been followed by the shake of the head interrogative, mistaken by us for the shake derisive—was confidential; and that the whole pantomime meant:—"You see what a nice piece of work we are engaged upon here. How are *you* getting on?"

Waiting for coffee and pipes before entering upon our business, we watched the constant ingress and egress of persons of all degrees—town tradesmen, village labourers, suitors, debtors, and others—and noted the uniformity of the sign betokening humility or submission which each made as he entered: drawing his garments close about him, and laying his hands one over the other on his breast. This gesture is quite distinct from and succeeds the salutation: it has no parallel in our own country.

The pipes discussed, and the coffee disposed of, we took advantage of a lull in the hum of that disjointed, purposeless talk which pervades the proceedings of an Ottoman tribunal to introduce our business; requesting, as a preliminary to it, that the ladies might be temporarily banished from the council-chamber; and, when this was done, we proceeded to narrate—much as we have here narrated—the occurrence of the previous day, to the infinite amusement of the *Caimakam* and all the council—except the old Jew with the woolly beard, who appeared afraid to participate in the merri-

ment which, for the moment, reigned in the sacred precincts of the great court of the province. We terminated our narration by expressing the hope that, with a view to the tranquillity of our future existence, the council might decree the faithless swain to restore to Polyxene the ring "that she did give him;" and we requested that, in the event of their sage deliberations resulting in this happy conclusion, the restoration might be effected through the instrumentality of our own dragoman, whom, we stated, we would previously instruct to attach to the restoration this condition: that its fair owner should never again invade the sanctity of our summer parlour.

At this request the *Caimakam* placed the point of one forefinger to his temple—the finger being held quite horizontal, and retained in position for a brief space. Glancing round, we perceived that other Mussulman members of the council were engaged in a like telegraphy; looking at each other and saying, "Did you understand?"—reminding us how invariably with the Turks this same gesture accompanies the perception or suspicion of a hidden meaning, or the detection or appreciation of some secret design.

We now took our leave and retired, and the issue of our mission proved to be satisfactory.

SALMAGUNDI.

RECENT New York newspapers have announced the death of Gulian C. Verplanck. He was not only the intimate friend of Washington Irving, but he assisted him in his literary work, "*Salmagundi*; or, the Whim-whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff," which was published with Washington Irving's name on the title-page; but was known to be the joint production of Irving, James K. Paulding, and Verplanck. Yet, although Washington Irving was the presiding genius of the work, he was far from assuming the credit of all the articles contained in it; and his own productions are given under his pseudonym of "Launcelot Langstaff"—a name, by the way, which is omitted from Mr. Olphar Hamst's "Handbook of Fictitious Names." Paulding wrote the social articles ascribed to "Anthony Evergreen, Gent.," and Verplanck penned the critical essays supposed to be written by "William Wizard, Esq." In the "Introduction" to the work, Washington Irving

says:—"As everybody knows, or ought to know, what a *salmagundi* is, we shall spare ourselves the trouble of an explanation; besides, we despise trouble as we do everything that is low and mean, and hold the man who would incur it unnecessarily as an object worthy our highest pity and contempt." From which we may infer that the author had really very hazy ideas as to the meaning or nature of *salmagundi*; and that to venture upon an explanation of its mysteries was to intrude upon troublesome, not to say unsafe, ground. And, in this respect, the admirable author of "*The Sketch Book*" showed his wisdom and discretion.

For it is remarkable how widely people differ as to the meaning of "*salmagundi*," and to what diversities of opinion etymologists are carried in their endeavours to affix the proper signification to the curious word. Washington Irving, I may observe, was not the first author to make use of the word as the title of a collection of miscellanies. The "*Salmagundi*" of which he was the editor was published in 1811; but it had been anticipated by at least one work—though the one was in prose, the other in verse; this was the "*Salmagundi: a Miscellaneous Combination of Original Poetry*," published in quarto, in 1791, without an author's name. Its editor, however, is known to have been the Rev. George Huddesford, M.A., of New College, Oxford, and Vicar of Loxley, Warwickshire, who died in 1809, aged fifty-nine. It is a humorous production, and most of its contents were written by himself. He was also the author of "*Topsy-turvy*," "*Bubble and Squeak*," "*Crambe Repetita*," and other works of a like nature.

As to the meaning of the word "*salmagundi*," all are agreed that it is a dish of something; though they disagree as to what that something is. The majority, however, decide that fish, more especially salt fish, must be a leading ingredient. The dictionary-makers are all at loggerheads on the subject; and, when lexicographers differ, how shall students agree? Ménage, in 1694, explained *salmigondi* as a sort of ragout or pot-pourri; and gave as its derivation *salgami-conditus*, contracted into *salmi-conditus*, and further contracted to *salmigondi*. The ancients, he further explained—and a like explanation is given by Facciolatus and Forcellinus—gave the name of *salgama* to apples, pears, figs, raisins, turnips, radishes, cucumbers, grapes,

purslain, cabbage, and the like, preserved with salt in vases. The Latin Dictionary of J. Field, 1669, also gives the word *salmagama* with the above meaning. Richardson, in his dictionary, accepts and adopts the foregoing derivation. John Kersey, in his "Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum," 1708, explains, "salmagundi or salmagund, an Italian dish made of cold turkey, anchovies, lemons, &c." Webster, 1832, makes the word to be a corruption of the Spanish *salpicon*, a salad made of cold meat, usually beef, cut into small pieces, pepper, salt, vinegar, and onions. Whereas French Dictionaries explain it to be a "ragoût de plusieurs sortes de viandes réchauffées"—"Et c'est de là que nous avons dit salmigondi, pour dire un ragoust composé de différens morceaux; ce que nous appelons autrement un pot-pourri." Johnson explains salmagundi as a corruption of *selon mon goût*, or *salé à mon goût*; and describes it as a mixture of chopped meat and pickled herrings, with condiments. He does not give any quotation or reference; but on this I think that I can throw a light. Dr. Johnson was a contributor to a periodical of the salmagundi order, called "The Student; or, the Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany," published in 1751; and on page 109 of vol. ii. is the following description of a foreign count:—"His library was small, and contained only a few tomes of memoirs, romances, routes, and *guides des étrangers*; but what he most valued was a manuscript book of cookery, in Madame Maintenon's own hand, with the original receipt for *selon mon goût*—Anglice, *salamagundy*—and the same that the count himself has since communicated to Monsieur Cloe." It seems probable that Dr. Johnson had read this, and had made a note of it for his dictionary; and I presume that the "Monsieur Cloe" must be the same famous *chef* to whom Mr. William Vernal, of the White Hart Inn, Lewes, was indebted for the chief portion of his cookery-book, entitled "A Complete System of Cookery; in which is set forth a variety of genuine receipts, collected from several years' experience under the celebrated M. de St. Clouet, sometime cook to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle. Together with a true character of Mons. de St. Clouet. Lond., 8vo. 1759." I am unable, however, to refer to a copy of this scarce work; and I cannot, therefore, say if it gives the receipt above referred to, and what the composition of Madame de Maintenon's

selon mon goût may have been. Could it have resembled the receipt given by Meg Dods for salmagundi? "Wash and cut open at the breast two large Dutch or Lochfine pickled herrings; take the meat from the bones without breaking the skin, and keep on the head, tail, fins, &c.; mince the fish, the breast of a cold roast chicken skinned, a couple of hard-boiled eggs, an onion, a boned anchovy, and a little grated ham or tongue; season with salad oil, vinegar, cayenne, and salt; and fill up the herring-skins so that they look plump and well-shaped. Garnish with scraped horse-radish, and serve mustard with the dish. *Obs.* An *ornamental salmagundi* was another of the frippery dishes of former times. This edifice was raised on a china bowl reversed, and placed in the middle of a dish, crowned with what, by the courtesy of the kitchen, was called a pineapple made of fresh butter. Around were laid—stratum above stratum—chopped eggs, minced herring and veal, rasped meat and minced parsley. The whole surmounted by a triumphal arch of herring-bones, and adorned with a garnishing of barberries and samphires." This receipt of Mrs. Meg Dods agrees, in the main, with the north-country dish called *salamagundy*, in which salads and salt herrings were the chief ingredients; though, in the South of England, lobsters took the place of herrings, so that the salmagundy was there equivalent to the modern lobster-salad.

Supposing the reference to Madame de Maintenon's *selon mon goût* to have any basis in fact, it would effectually dispose of the claim of Catherine de Medici to the sponsorial honours of salmagundi. Bailey, in his dictionary (14th edition, 1751), thus gives the word and its derivation:—"Salmagundi: salmingondin (in cookery): an Italian dish, or a hotch-potch of several sorts of cold meat. This word had its origin from Catherine de Medicis, Queen of France, whose head cook's name was Gondi, and who used to wait upon her at table; and she, loving her victuals pretty highly-seasoned, would often call for salt, *Sal mi Gondi*; whence this relishing dish has obtained its name." This is a good example of getting over a philological difficulty *per saltum*. But another version of the story is told, which is attributed to "One of the Queens of France, whose chief lady-in-waiting was of the Italian family of Gondi; and, during dinner, the former was continually

asking for her favourite condiment, "Le sel, ma Gondi—le sel, ma Gondi;" from whence the courtiers gave the name *salmagundi* to the popular dish." And I have met with still another version of the dish's derivative: that it was invented by one Gondi or Gundi, a minister of state, and was called from him Salmi de Gondi, which became corrupted into salmagundi, or that *salmigondis* which is explained in the French dictionaries to mean "hotch-potch, olio." And, indeed, there seems no end to the ingenuity of people in seeking out the derivation of salmagundi; for I have met with yet another version, which drops the Gondi altogether, and makes the word to have originally been *Salmi Condé*, or *Salmi à la Condé*.

My readers have now the choice of these derivations. Enough has been said to show their diversity, which is as great as the variety of receipts for the dish. And, indeed, the doubts, difficulties, and contradictions which beset salmagundi would appear to apply to the authorship of the book under that title edited by Washington Irving; for, although I commenced this paper by saying—on what seems to be sufficient authority—that the two authors who assisted Irving in the production of "*Salmagundi*" were Paulding and Verplanck, I yet end the paper by asserting, on the authority of the American writer, Mr. William A. Wheeler, that the third writer in the work was not the recently deceased Gulian C. Verplanck, but "William Irving" (see "Names of Noted Fiction," under the head of "Langstaff, Launcelot"). So that this article is, from beginning to end, a hotch-potch of confusion; yet, if it be acceptable to the reader's taste, it will the more aptly carry out its title, "*Salmagundi*."

TABLE TALK.

IN AN ARTICLE ON "Impropriety for the Million," in the *Saturday Review*, April 9, the writer says—"Even at the West-end (theatres) it might be difficult to distinguish the sinner from the saint, if we were not helped by observing that a copious tawny mane denotes vice, while a moderate supply of black hair is appropriated to virtue." Certainly, the "tawny" hair has come greatly into fashion for heroines of a peculiar character; and it is to Mr. Thackeray that we owe the epithet. When, in 1847, he first introduced Becky Sharp to the

world, he described her, at page 10, as being "sandy-haired;" but when his "Novel without a Hero" had advanced to its 458th page—to that famous scene where Mrs. Becky personates Clytemnestra in an acted charade—we are told that "her tawny hair floats down her shoulders." For, at that point in the history, Becky's character had become sufficiently developed to admit of the advanced epithet.

AMONG THE LITERARY ANNOUNCEMENTS of the forthcoming season is "a thick, handsomely-printed quarto volume, with illustrations, price £3 13s. 6d., large paper £5 5s., 'The History of Whalley.'" It may be necessary to state to some of the admirers of the senior member for Peterborough, that this work is not of a biographical nature, but is a new edition of Dr. Whitaker's admirable addition to the county history of Lancashire. The Whalley here mentioned is but a small town; but it is applied as the comprehensive name for a district thirty miles in length by fifteen in breadth, comprising several market towns, chapelries, and townships, and numbering more than one hundred thousand inhabitants. A portion of the parish of Whalley is in Lancashire; two other portions are in Cheshire and Yorkshire; so that, while the parochial Whalley is a representative of portions of three counties, the parliamentary Whalley is a representative of portions of two counties—for Peterborough, for electoral purposes, stands in Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire, and in the sees of Peterborough and Ely.

A CORRESPONDENT: I bought the other day the first number of a weekly journal, "devoted to the promotion of marriage and conjugal felicity," for which I regret the expenditure of twopence, and cordially wish the paper all manner of ill-success. It opens with a list of ladies and gentlemen "aspiring to marriage." They artlessly set forth their own virtues, and proclaim their desires. There are a hundred and fifty of these aspirants. Most of them are, we may presume, mere emanations from the brain of the gifted editor, put forth as bait to allure silly persons of both sexes. Doubtless, there will be some foolish enough to make a shot at happiness in this the worst of all ways to win it. The majority of the advertisers are women—I beg their pardon,

ladies. A great many are widows, "hand-some," and mostly aged forty. The larger number of advertisers state their age as over thirty—but are all "good-looking," except one, and even she is "ladylike." Curiously, too, they all have money. One, indeed, is a great catch. This young thing is the daughter of a country gentleman, "an only child," aged thirty-eight: good-looking and accomplished, and "will likely" (*sic*) inherit £30,000. Who will take pity on her? Could we not have an exhibition of ladies and gentlemen, in separate rooms, who "aspire" to be married? Labels should be affixed, setting forth their age, profession, means, expectations, and personal defects, if any. Thus:—"This is Jones. City clerk. Gets £130 a-year. Twenty-eight. Fond of music halls. Can sing 'Rollicking Rams.' No expectations. Smokes a good deal. Never reads. Calculated to make any woman happy." Of such stuff would probably be the class who would endeavour, by means of an advertising column, to get themselves wives.

IT IS MORE YEARS AGO than I care to remember that I met at dinner, at a Durham prebend's, the author of "The Diary of a Late Physician," whose *Blackwood* novel of "Ten Thousand a Year" had just then achieved a great success. We knew the writer to be Mr. Samuel Warren, a barrister on the Great Northern Circuit, and (it was the assize week) with whom was another barrister—then well known to fame, but whose popularity has since increased—Mr. Tom Taylor, one of the famous "pens" on *Punch*. The reverend host of the evening had himself made substantial contributions to literature, and the conversation naturally turned on books and their writers. In the course of this "table talk," someone said that no novel could be thoroughly successful unless a love story formed the leading portion of its contents. Mr. Warren took up the pleadings for the other side of the question, and asserted that he believed that he himself could write a novel which should be both interesting and successful, and yet should be freed from the usual love story. The result of that evening's conversation was eventually embodied in Mr. Warren's novel, "Now and Then"—a story written to support a theory. I call this to mind, because I have just returned from looking upon a picture that was painted to support a theory. This

is Delaroche's famous picture of Lady Jane Grey's execution, one of the gems of the Demidoff Gallery, and purchased from it the other day by Mr. Eaton, who has generously allowed it to be exhibited at his house, 16, Prince's-gate—the half-crown fee for admittance being given to the funds of the Hospital for Women. Of the five figures in this picture, not one shows the open eye. Poor Lady Jane would look direct to the spectator, but the handkerchief is already round her eyes; her two maidens are bowed with sorrow; and the executioner and divine are so placed that their eyes are hidden. It is said that Delaroche painted this picture to prove his theory that pathos could be secured without using the human eye as a vehicle for expression. He had also something like a theory regarding the painting of straw; and, because he could render it effectively, he introduced it, instead of sawdust, strewn in front of the fatal block.

IT IS NOT OFTEN that the *Athenæum*—generally a careful paper—presents its readers with such a splendid confusion of metaphors as that in the following paragraph (April 9th):—

"Mr. Massey has in this poem evidently striven with earnestness to embody the unseen—to recover ground from the invisible. Phantoms are revealed to us; and sounds, hitherto unheard, are translated into things of sight."

The writer has almost equalled the celebrated Irish orator who told the House he would now embark on the principal feature on which this question hinged. For, while other poets have been content to make the unseen—whatever that may be—visible, Mr. Massey, his reviewer tells us, has "sought to recover ground from the invisible." The invisible what? More extraordinary still: he has translated a *sound* which no one ever heard before into something to look at. The transformation of a sound to a sight is certainly the most wonderful feat yet accomplished by poet.

An Illustration, printed separately on Toned Paper, is published with the present Weekly Number.

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BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

CHAPTER XIII.



HE drove through themurky town, with its grim walls, its thick atmosphere of smoke, he could not help noticing the flaming posters on the wall. Anything of a theatrical

nature was odious to his eyes; but here was actually that hated name again—"Miss LYDIA EFFINGHAM for three nights more." And actually in that play of the "immortal Lytton"—"The Lady of Lyons." Here was, as he anticipated, the key to the whole. Never mind. He was glad to have all the elements thus brought together. He would the more quickly dispose of them.

Mr. Benbow went straight to the theatre, and asked to see Miss Effingham. She was at that moment on the stage. The theatre of the manufacturing town was far more ambitious than the little one at Dipchester—a new, spacious, handsome build-

ing. "She is getting on," thought Mr. Benbow, with bitterness. He then asked for her address, which, according to stage practice, was met by a plea of utter ignorance. No appeals of his could wring out the secret: the watch-dog, in his little kennel at the stage-door, being surly and reticent, with a mastiff-like fidelity rarely found outside the profession. Much put out by this opposition to his wishes, he determined to wait, and took up his position in a shop opposite. In a short time, with a sore heart and burning cheeks, he saw his son come forth in attendance on the actress. What degradation! what misery! what low, mean walking in mud and filth all this was! It made him ill; but he felt that action was necessary, and he followed them cautiously at a distance.

He saw them go into a decent house, and then endured a still longer watch of more than an hour; when his son came forth, with a face lit up with a sort of fatuous enjoyment, and glorified with the light of happiness. He felt utterly humiliated at this spectacle, and inclined to go out and meet him—this low, craven, grovelling fellow, that would disgrace his name if he could. Instead, he went over to the house, and asked to see Miss Effingham; sending up his name. In a moment he was before her.

It was wonderful to see the meeting of these two persons—the dislike, rage, and contempt that came into Mr. Benbow's face as he saw this detestable obstacle to all his most darling plans; while a strange and no less vindictive look was in hers.

"We have met before," she said, "but at a greater distance. What do you want with me, Mr. Benbow?"

"Let us have no subterfuges, or any stage business!" he said, coldly. "You understand perfectly what has brought me here. I want my son. I am content to put it on a business-like footing. You have

obtained an influence over him, and I want to set him free."

"Quite like Germont in a certain opera," she said. "Not much of a compliment to me."

"It is you yourself who have paid the compliment, whatever it is. I know nothing of Germonts or operas. I wish to have my son back, and to know how it can be arranged."

"Yes; to sacrifice him to some ambitious ends, just as you have done all through your life—driven your Juggernaut car at full gallop over everything that was human, gentle, affectionate! Yours has been a blood-stained course, Mr. Benbow. Now you wish for another victim."

"I did not come to discuss such things. I must request you will confine yourself to the matter in hand. I should like to put all this on a business footing. I do not, you see, dispute your powers of fascination—your great charms." This he said ironically. "I admit your dangerous graces, and am prepared to come to terms. You are an actress—a 'lady on the stage.' It is a hard life, as I am told; and you might be saved a great deal of its toils—"

"But, as we are speaking of terms—and, as I suppose, what you mean is to 'buy me off'—I am entitled to know what your object is. Are you aware that I am a gentleman's daughter, though Effingham is not my real name?"

"I thought so," he said. "I believe it to be the custom of your profession."

"My father was a gentleman, but had the misfortune to offend a great man—a pitiless, cruel, heartless great man, who, in revenge, ruined then killed him. That is an old story now, and, I believe, is repeating itself every day. You, Mr. Benbow, might also have found someone in your way whom it became necessary to crush. There are some persons with principle who will take no hint, decline all your offers, and who must be crushed. Suppose I am one of those who *refuse* to be bought off, who will not take your offers, and who decline to be crushed. Perhaps—who knows but that I may have the power of crushing you?"

"Well," he replied, calmly, "suppose you do proceed with your plans: what will be the result? I cast off my son without a halfpenny—without a farthing. As there is a heaven over us, I will do this—I swear it! I shall find some other heir for my

estate. He shall be to me as though he were in his coffin. Ask my friends if I have ever gone back of what I have said. You will have the ruin of that poor, stupid lad on you."

She seemed to reflect over this.

"I have not sought him," she said, "he has pursued me. I left that place, as they will tell you, without leaving the slightest clue behind me. He has literally hunted me down. I am not a stock or a stone—I cannot be insensible to such affection. But still I should not like to ruin the poor boy: it would be an ill return for his devotion. What can I do?"

A sort of elation came into his breast. All these creatures belonged to the same vile, mercenary herd. After all, he was a true diplomatist, who knew human nature so well! *He had the key in his pocket.* Was it not Walpole who said, "Every man had his price"? But to every woman there was a *little key*, if you only knew where to look for it.

Then Mr. Benbow became eloquent and friendly. They talked the matter over for nearly an hour. She more and more appeared to come into his views. At last he said, "Your family, you tell me, are in America; why should not you try your great talents before an American audience? I know little or nothing about the stage, as you may well imagine—it is all foreign to me. But I know people of vast influence who can command these matters; and I could guarantee you every chance, and the most splendid opening. Our minister there at this moment is my intimate. I know one of the great *entrepreneurs*, who will do anything for me. Agree to this, and you will have made a sacrifice, but you will have saved a whole family. Nay, you will have saved *me*. For I own to you this business would disgrace me—break my heart. Do!"

A curious look of triumph came into her eyes.

"Well; I am sure *you* would never have resisted such an appeal from anyone—say from some wretched, broken-down creature who had offended you and was pleading for mercy. Go!—I consent. But it must be managed delicately. Wait until to-morrow morning. Leave it to me. I shall settle it all with him."

Transported with joy and gratitude, Mr. Benbow agreed to everything, and left her triumphantly. Who knew the world so well

as he did? Who knew the lower class of women, with their invariable story of being a gentleman's daughter? He then went to his hotel, and sent a note to his son, telling him to come up and dine.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE meeting of father and son was curious. The former remarked already a change in his son. He was more excited and confident, and seemed to have grown into a man, with an air of responsibility. This gave him a shock, and he looked at Charles with a sort of terror.

"Let us say no more about the past. You have done a miserably foolish thing, which has gone well-nigh to ruin all our chances. Still, it is not too late. Promise that you will dismiss this matter from your thoughts for ever, and I shall take you regularly to the Duke's, and engage to patch all up."

The young man made no opposition.

"To be sure, sir; I shall be ready to go in the morning. As for dismissing the matter from my thoughts, I cannot promise that; neither can I promise to recommend myself to Lady Rosa. I cannot force her to like me. I don't think she does. But then I am not so sanguine as you, sir. I cannot tell you how I have loved this lady, and you cannot expect me to give her up in a moment."

"No; I am not unreasonable—it will take time."

"How long am I supposed to stay with the Duke?"

"As long as they do you the honour to keep you. Take care what you are doing, Charles. I tell you I shan't be trifled with; nor I won't have that actress trifled with, either."

"I shall not trifle with her, I promise you, sir. Indeed, I mean to turn over a new leaf."

Father and son talked away until late, when the son begged to go to see her in the play for the last time.

"To be sure. Let us both go."

Both set off for the theatre.

It was a really handsome building—on a very different scale from that of Ditchester. This was some of the manufacturing wealth of the place. The company, too, was excellent. As they entered, the brilliant Pauline was appealing to another gardener's son, and was the centre of attrac-

tion for a very crowded house. A burst of applause broke out as they sat down, which brought a flush of triumph into the boy's face, and an angry contraction to his father's brow. The latter heard very little of what was going on. The son was absorbed. At the end he rose to leave his father.

"I shall keep to our contract, father, never fear; but to-night I must see her."

What a new tone this—as Mr. Benbow felt—to be addressed to him. Contract, indeed! But he said nothing.

With the morning the young man was ready to go.

"I have changed my mind, Charles. I see that I can trust you, and trust to your honour. I shall not bring you to the Duke as if in custody. No, no! You have given me your word."

The young man, in a singular elation that puzzled Mr. Benbow, went his way. "It is very strange," he thought, "this confidence in what I say. It looks as if he was secure."

He was so troubled that he went to see Miss Effingham once more.

"I am not at ease," he said, "Miss Effingham; and I tell you so frankly. My son has agreed to my wishes too eagerly."

"Because he has arranged to see me after he has returned from that place—from school."

"He has dared to do that! Hypocrite! And what do you say?"

"I am passive, though I am willing to do anything."

"You gave me your word, though. Would you object to put it under your hand—I mean what you promised?"

There was an eagerness to comply with everything that he proposed in this woman that ought to have excited the suspicions of so trained a worldling.

"Anything you wish," she said. "I will carry out my engagement loyally, never fear."

"I mean," said he, "will you faithfully give all effect to what you have promised—conveying to him that you have quite given him up, that—that you even like another; or some proof as strong?"

"I have no objection," she answered.

"And might I ask, *why* are you so complaisant?" he said, suspiciously.

"O, for reasons of my own, which you may one day discover. It is enough for you that I am ready to do what you wish.

Only understand this—it is no compliment. You must not dare, in any light way—talking with your friends or with *him*—ever to hint that you have sent me away. It would be false—you know it would. I am ready to go to-morrow—next week, if you wish—and I shall not let him know. That will be enough for *you*, and *must* be enough. Again I tell you, I will loyally and honourably carry out all that I have engaged to do. That must be enough, and you will see that I shall not fail you. There—I shall say no more.”

“It is sufficient,” said Mr. Benbow, “and I am more than content. I shall go up to London at once, and shall all but guarantee you a splendid American engagement—if money or influence can do it. There is just another stipulation—you will stay away for two years at least.”

“I promise—I swear it, if you like.”

She said this so eagerly, that Mr. Benbow started and said—“This is really incomprehensible. Why should you be so willing to forward my wishes?”

“You asked me that before. Perhaps you shall know one day.”

CHAPTER XV.

BANFF CASTLE was a vast, fortress-like pile, with drawbridge, &c., and supported in the most complete and magnificent style. The present Duke had, indeed, “no money:” was enormously embarrassed: but still had always plenty of money. At periodical intervals came some vast operation, through his agents—much as Messrs. Oppenheim appear for his Highness the Khedive. He was never pressed—was far too magnificent to suffer pressure: it passed by him like the idle wind. He was, indeed, as his admirers said, “a princely man:” handsome, young—though grandfather many times over—and, as was before mentioned, called by his christian name in his family. Nearly all his daughters and sons had made splendid alliances; and there remained but one or two of each class, who were plain enough—as far as concerned the daughters—and deficient, as regards the sons. One of the former was to marry Mr. Benbow’s son—not a magnificent alliance, certainly; but still to be repaid by advancement in a certain way for the Duke’s son, through the Benbow cleverness and interest political.

The young man, on arrival, was almost

bewildered by the state of the place. The Banffs had that precious liquor, or ichor, Royal blood—a mere drop or two, certainly—dribbling through their veins; and they displayed scarlet and gold liveries. There were all sorts of retainers, under strange and half-sovereign names. The Duke himself moved in a sort of regal state, with an officer of the household marching before him—of course, not on all occasions—but whenever he wished to appear in state. The buffet of plate was a structure of enormous height and solidity, and might have adorned the palace at Pekin. At dinner he sat on a dais, with his duchess. But all this was done in an unobtrusive way, as though it was incident to his birth and office, and rather a duty for him to endure.

In the castle was staying a crowd of notables: a Royal Prince and his lady, with another Duke; lords in profusion; official beauties of rank; a minister or two: in short, it was a galaxy; and when the procession to the banqueting hall was formed on the first evening—when the young man took his place—he felt quite “lowly” almost, as the stars and ribbons flashed around him. He had not a vulgar mind; but it was impossible to resist the overwhelming character of the exhibition. He was amused, and delighted, and flattered by the good-nature of the Duke and his family; who accepted his excuses, and were specially attentive to him. The young lady was gracious, and even partial; and, after dinner, the Royal personage, who liked billiards, played a game at pool, in which young Mr. Charles took part—selected for the honour by the host.

After all, he was a “mere boy”—impressionable—illogical—and without that sense of consistency which his elders think so necessary, even to preserve their private credit at their own hearts. He looked to the present. He was dazzled. He did not dwell on the image of his actress—persistently, at least. It was obscured for a time. His eyes were quite dazzled with the social gold and silver presented to them—his senses, it would seem, confused by the incense which a dignified retainer had gone round with, after swinging up and down the table. Faith, constancy, fidelity, are plants that find it hard to thrive in such an atmosphere: their petals shrink up; it is stifling for them. To the present possessors

they seem to dwindle down from the boundless and magnificent forms they possessed—the chivalry and nobility—into very prosaic shape.

At first the young man was bewildered—then curious—then pleased. There was a gentleman of fortune there, Sir Alfred Turner, a young squire of good birth and vast wealth, whom he saw at once was on terms of great intimacy with Lady Rosa; who took possession of that lady with an overpowering self-satisfied manner; who was most lively, full of stories, fun—"an agreeable Rattle," like Marlow in the play—and who was received by everyone with good-natured favour. Young Mr. Benbow felt that he could take no position near this pleasant creature. He was overpowered; he had not the gifts to make a struggle; and he felt how inferior and untrained he was in such a collection of clever and wealthy people. Everyone, too, was very kind and indulgent—gave him many openings, but he could not avail himself of them. And he saw—what was a little mortifying to his vanity—there was no eagerness on the part of his hosts to force their alliance on him; and, in fact, they seemed to have given him up in favour of the new comer.

Some days—and very pleasant ones—went by. One evening, at dinner, a gentleman told some news about a great friend, known to all the company—one Bob Lyster, who was in the Life Guards.

"He has crowned his whole career. What do you think he has done? Married a girl off the boards!"

There was a smile of contemptuous pity.

"Just what I would have imagined," said a lady of title. "The finish I always prophesied for him."

"I only think," said another, "of poor Lady Mary, his mother. It will break her heart, poor woman. Such a disgrace for the family. You may have known him, Mr. Benbow? I assure you, I always said he would make some such disreputable finale."

"But there *have* been some actresses married into great families," he said, faltering.

"Yes, but it was none the less disgraceful. Not a word can be said for it, even in these levelling days. The family—we all know whom you mean—have *lived it down*. But imagine the misery caused by the intro-

duction of such creatures, with their paint and gewgaws! O, it is not to be thought of. Poor Lady Mary! One is tempted to write her a letter of condolence, as if for a death."

The chorus of endorsement that greeted this sentiment made a deep impression on the young Mr. Benbow, and made him thoughtful. There was no reasoning on the matter. It was taken to be one of the self-evident truths, like the sun in the heavens. And, indeed, it did seem self-evident to him now, for the first time; though he was ready to defend his thesis boldly and eagerly. Still it *required arguments*—a new state of things for him.

It was, indeed, a pleasant time, and the days rolled away. But the baronet was eagerly pushing his trenches and works of circumvallation. He was one of those restless, active persons who are not to be repulsed; and he seemed to have a special pleasure in "cutting out" young Mr. Benbow. The young lady, too, was passive—seemed to hold herself in reserve—a prize, as it were, for the one who exerted himself most. This sort of behaviour unconsciously piqued Mr. Charles, and fretted him. Even the Duke was kind, and favoured him; and he could not ask more—reasonably, at least. The young lady had, perhaps, not forgiven his reluctance on another occasion; and she may have found it beneath her dignity to make any further advances.

All this time he received no letters from his father—that prudent diplomatist preferring to let matters take their own course, or not spur a willing horse.

One day, when out shooting, Mr. Charles heard the gentlemen talking of the progress the Baronet was making with the young lady; and a free and off-hand cavalier said that it was only a question of time. This piqued our young hero. There is the old vanity in all—that feeling, too, represented by the incident of the dog in the manger; and this prompted him—as it were, shutting his eyes, going to dream for a short time, then wake up to business—to exert himself.

One night there was a ball, and the young lady looked more charming, and was more gracious, than she had been for long. Charles danced with her once or twice, and late in the night came to ask for another dance. Just as he was leading her away, his rival came up eagerly, and claimed a prior engagement. He seemed inclined to

settle it as a matter of course, with an implied tone in his voice—"You are not in any case going to prefer this fellow to *me*—this boy." But, to his indignation, the lady went away with Mr. Benbow.

"I am afraid," the latter was saying, with a sort of half-triumph, "there was some justice on his side."

She smiled. "There is no question of it. I have behaved very badly and very unjustly."

"What, you *were* engaged to him!"

"Yes, since you ask me."

"And you prefer to dance with me?" he said, brusquely—and stupidly, it would appear to some. But it told on this occasion more than the most artfully contrived speech.

She smiled. "Supposing for a moment that I did, am I to tell you so?"

"If I thought that," said the young man, excitedly—"if I was sure—if I only knew—"

He forgot everything before—and all that was to come.

"If I thought," he went on—"but I know that there are ladies who will lead you on, just for the pleasure of securing a proposal."

"For such I have a contempt," she answered; "such cannot be ladies."

"Then some men might not have the courage to offer themselves. It might be presumptuous."

"Well," she said, smiling, "they ought to have courage."

It was sorely tempting. There must be just allowance for him. It is hard to blame him. And he went to his room that night flushed, triumphant, excited, in an undecided state, shutting his eyes to the future, enjoying the sweet present. But on his table he found a letter waiting, in a handwriting that he knew, that brought him to his senses. It ran:—

"DEAREST CHARLES—Come to me at once; I am leaving this, to-morrow evening, when the packet sails. When I shall return, heaven knows. But I charge you, by the vows you have sworn to me, to leave that Capua where you now are; break through all attempts made to detain you, and meet me here, at the hotel. Come quickly. Yours for ever,
"LYDIA."

He was quite ashamed to think of himself as he read this document—the sort of impatience with which he got through it. It

came at such an awkward time. The image was before him—began to take the old glory. But somehow he was put out. The notion of sacrifice was arising, and he went to bed in rather an ill-humour. He must leave in the morning betimes, before any one was up; but he would be back by the evening, in time for dinner. The thought of losing the beautiful Lydia disturbed him. What was she going away for? She need not do it. He would see her and arrange all that. Going to America! Wherefore? Could she not have got an engagement in England? An engagement! An actress! The word jarred on him.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT KLOPSTOCK AND QUEDLINBURG.

SKIRTING along the northern border-land of the Harz regions, and leaving the Brocken in the rear, one passes through many small outlying towns and villages, which are able to boast of woodwork of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by no means unworthy of gracing places of much greater pretensions. Wernigerode, above which towers the castle residence of its lord—in whose Grafschaft, be it observed, the roads are much better than in some of the adjacent principalities—is one of these; and, besides the elaborate workmanship displayed on several of its curious houses, can show, in its ancient church, a carved pulpit of much beauty.

From Wernigerode one journeys on past the great sandstone range, where Henry the Fowler, the emperor *par excellence* associated with this part of the Harz district, raised fortifications in the tenth century; and whose robber-graf, the lord of Regenstein, was, later on, captured, in consequence of his many depredatory acts, and confined by the citizens of the then imperial city of Quedlinburg for two tedious years in a rude wooden cage, which cage is still shown at the Rathshaus of the ancient town.

Still on, past Blankenburg, upon whose antiquated Schloss one looks with interest, as the home in which Maria Theresa spent some of her early years; and, leaving the Teufelsmauer to the right, we jolted on over a rugged road, through Westerhausen, and before long came in sight of the spires and domes of a much more important place than had yet been met with on the way.

"Quedlinburg," said the driver.

We rose to take a view of the points and pinnacles.

"Quedlinburg."

"Klopstock and Meta," ejaculated we in our hearts. Not that I am aware that Meta was ever at Quedlinburg; but when one mentions the name of Klopstock, that of Meta follows naturally. Meta is inseparable from the halo that still hangs—though, perhaps, somewhat hazily—around the memory of the dead poet. Meta—his aureole, his lily crown wherewith he hoped to be recrowned in heaven.

Quedlinburg: once a free town of the empire, founded by Henry the Fowler, A.D. 920. So say the chronicles; and, furthermore, they inform us that there he died and there he was buried; which latter is corroborated by the woman who shows strangers over the Stiftskirche, pointing out in the crypt the tomb of the emperor and that of his wife Matilda.

Quedlinburg: for many years the residence of Aurora von Königsmarck, mother of Marshal Saxe, and some time prioress of the convent there. She also died at Quedlinburg, and was interred in this same Stiftskirche. Formerly, her remains might have been seen by the curious; but now they are decently buried away. We saw a portrait of the celebrated beauty at the Schloss, and can only hope that it was not a correct one. It represents her as a stout woman of the Queen Anne type, with brown hair and ruddy cheeks; and, in a second picture, wherein she and her sister are diverting themselves upon musical instruments, she makes no better a figure. Therefore, we come to the conclusion that either history or art must be greatly at fault. Let us charitably hope the latter.

Quedlinburg! There, on the 2nd of July, 1724, was born Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock. He did not die there; he was not buried there, but far away in the churchyard of Ottensen, he sleeps under the tombstone of white Carrara marble erected to him "by his second loving and beloved spouse."

All honour to Johannah Elizabeth for the wording of the epitaph engraven thereon. Its opening lines would prove her a noble woman, even were there nought else left upon earth to show it:—

"By the side of his Meta and his child rests Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock."

No exactingness in the love she bore her husband! She understood that first great love of his, and could bear to see the lilies planted on the grave of her of whom to the last he loved to speak, and likened to the lily, since "the lily was the most exalted of flowers, and Meta the most exalted among women."

We drove on up a narrow street, into another equally so, devoutly thankful to have met no other vehicle upon the way; and, after a few more turnings, clattered into the market-place, and drove up to the Hôtel Zum Bär.

Why had we chosen it?

Simply because there was a mediæval savour about the name. Also, it brought to remembrance the "Bear and Ragged Staff," and Warwick-lane, and the Earl's retainers; the stout Guy, Kenilworth, and Sir Walter Scott; and everything that was in the least degree romantic. We had not been living in the present nineteenth century for some weeks; but had travelled in the spirit back to mediæval ages, and were resting pleasantly in the great repose of a past that had slept for so many years. The primitive quaintness and quietness of the places we had visited, the absence of the rush of English travellers, and hearing no word of English save from each other's lips, conduced greatly to this feeling, and had landed us in a dream wherein the past seemed present, and the present to flee far away.

But the present was coming a little nearer again, since it was but sixty-six years since Klopstock died; and what was that by the side of the nine hundred years that had elapsed since Henry the Fowler closed his eyes upon the city that he had founded, and upon the fair scenery and wild people that lay around it?

We found the Hôtel Zum Bär to be a comfortable hostelry—not pretentious, but substantial; giving the impression of having been established for years and years, and possessing a solid reputation of its own that was unaffected by the changes that went on around it, that had seen the life-reign of many a landlord, and that would survive the rule of many another.

Over nine hundred years since, Quedlinburg was called a town! How many changes had taken place since then! How many generations had flourished and passed away! The Neu-Preussen flag hangs be-

side the faded banners of I do not know how many abbesses of Quedlinburg in the old Rathshaus. Will it sometime have as many centuries to show, or is progress hurrying on to the end?

Progress is good—progress is better—progress is the best. So I muse, politically: taking in, in a wide sweep, the general good of mankind, and the propriety of the lesser interests being swamped in the greater. And then I give a half-sigh as I view the subject poetically, and I wish that progress would not pull down so many old houses; would not spoil a good deal of romance, that, if not of any great utilitarian value, has the problematic (?) one of beauty; and would not destroy quite so many landmarks of the past. But perhaps progress wants the space for all the new monuments it has to build—for all the improvements it has to compass; until, in time, progress will no longer have room for itself in the world.

Perhaps this is the truth we are being taught—or, rather, that we are going to learn—through the present whirlwind in which we are all living. There is not time enough here for the work the soul has to do: the body gets worn out too soon; it has not strength to accomplish the soul's desires. The wheels get clogged, the machinery altogether rusty and out of order, ere the motive-spring begins to wear out its action.

And so men die; and yet earth's progress still goes on. But their work is over. Over! Men die in the moment of victory. Is, then, their triumph at an end? Poets die. Is, therefore, their song hushed for ever? Loving ones die. Do they, therefore, cease to love? Workers die. Have, then, their labours ceased for evermore?

But what causes me to think of the future in connection with Quedlinburg? And the answer comes:—Because it is Klopstock's Quedlinburg; and Klopstock loved to contemplate the future, and looked not upon death as the ending of earthly ties and affections, but rather as the door giving entrance to that everlasting state wherein man shall pursue the life begun upon earth, one of whose greatest joys shall be our communion with those from whom we have been parted here below. In the fourth letter that he writes to his departed Meta, he thus expresses himself:—

“Let him who knows not yet the bliss of

the resurrection—who has not tasted its comforts—let him see a friend or a wife die, and he will learn it.

* * * * *

“What was this change in thee? Thou wert quite detached from this world. It was the beginning of eternal life. Though I know that thou hast never ceased to love me; yet this thought would be painful to me, had it not been for the sake of the great object of our worship that thou didst tear thyself even from me. But when thou hadst obtained the prize, then—this I hope to God, who gave thee to me—didst thou think on me again; then didst thou wish, with a peaceful wish of heaven, that I might soon come to thee! The will of God be done, as in heaven, so also on the earth!”

And in his third letter it is shadowed forth perhaps more strongly:—

“A little while ago, as I was alone at the approach of night, I imagined so strongly—I could almost say with such a degree of certainty—that thou wert before me, that I more than once spoke to thee. Oh! if thou wert indeed with me, then I need say nothing more. Oh! ye inhabitants of heaven, are ye sometimes around us? Oh! if this is allowed, my Meta has often already been with me. And why should ye not be permitted sometimes to visit us? Are ye not like the angels? and are not the angels sent down to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation? Ah! Meta, dost thou not still love me—love me so that thy heart, though in heaven, longs for me? How sweet—how inexpressibly sweet—is this thought! Yes, thou art for ever mine; thou wert made for me, my now quite heavenly love! Oh! that it would come—the moment of our meeting, that moment full of joy beyond expression! Oh! that it would come! But no; I must not give way to this idea. If I have ever clearly seen how confined we are, even with regard to our favourite pursuits—I mean the pursuit of our individual happiness—if I have ever seen this strongly, it was when, soon after thy death, I sometimes wished that thou mightest in some way make thyself known to me. What wish could be more natural? And what truer happiness could I have wished for myself in this world? Yet, what wish can be formed with less hope? And why is it not fulfilled? Because such a dis-

covery is incompatible with the general happiness of the whole. Thou seest now the whole system of this universal happiness. Would it be disturbed by thy making thyself known to me in my last moments? Oh! if thou mayest, without a doubt thou wilt. Then wilt thou hover not invisibly around me; then—what heaven is in the thought!—then wilt thou appear to my closing eyes. But do I not wish too much? Yes, far too much, if I spoke of reward; but I speak of grace, which God, through thee, might grant me."

As it has been said of Beatrice in relation to Dante, so may it be said of Meta with regard to Klopstock:—"To him she was living with a nobler life, with a power to bless and purify beyond that which she had possessed on earth." And the same hope animated Klopstock that animated the great Italian poet, that—"when the struggles of life were over, he might share in the blessedness of her immortality."

The "Vita Nuova" of Dante closes with these words:—

"After this sonnet there appeared to me a wonderful vision, in which I beheld things that made me propose to say no more of this blessed one until I shall be able to treat of her more worthily; and to attain thereunto truly I strive with all my power, *as she knoweth*." (The idea was present with him—as it was with Klopstock of his Meta—that Beatrice, even in heaven, was not unconscious of her lover.) "So that," he goes on, "if it shall be the pleasure of Him through whom all things live that my life continue somewhat longer, I hope to say of her what never yet was said of any woman. And then may it please Him who is the sire of courtesy that my soul may depart to look upon the glory of its lady—that is to say, of the blessed Beatrice, who in glory gazes into the face of Him *qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus*."

Widely different were the two men, and yet each, according to his own peculiar view, found consolation in the belief that the parting from the beloved object was but a temporary one, and that a link existed between them even then, and would last on into eternity. Protestant and Catholic found nothing in their creeds to render these hopes unreasonable, or against Scripture; but each held them, tintured by the

colouring of his faith and of his temperament; and to each the dead love was a guiding star of whose proximity they had a sort of consciousness—the barrier between them being only that of mortal sight. Bitterness filled the heart of the Italian—anguish, tenderness, and despair—and prompted his greater genius to the composition of his wonderful poem; whilst the better regulated heart of Klopstock gushed forth in hope and resignation, and the words that he addresses to his Meta are those of a calm and devout Christian.

Both early lost their loves. The one must almost have regarded his beloved one in the light of an angel whom at a distance he had worshipped; the other, after four years of happy married life, laid his wife and child in the same grave.

Both men married after the death of these early loves. Dante led an unhappy life, caused partly by a perhaps not unnatural jealousy on the part of Madonna Gemma, since her husband clung ever to his dreaming and absorbing love for Beatrice.

Klopstock, in his sixty-eighth year, married Johannah Elizabeth von Wenthén, who was nearly related to his first wife; and "much of the cheerfulness of old age was owing to his union with this lady."

But with both men the great mainspring of the life-action was the same—the power of the one soul with whom they had been bound in soul and spirit upon earth to exert, in some mysterious connection, an influence upon them still, though removed to another sphere.

Who doubts that the memory of his dead Meta was not more to Klopstock than the admiration of his countrymen, the veneration of the Swiss, and the honours bestowed upon him by the Danish King? or that the Italian poet could, in the contemplation of his sainted lady, forget even the ingratitude of his native place? For—I quote from a late review—"the memory of Beatrice was ever with him. She came to him with warning voice in dreams and visions of the night. Each new thought, each intuition of the truth gathered round her, and formed part of her aureole of glory." Yes; and the rays streamed down from that halo, and touched the suffering heart of the bearded poet; and through all his wanderings, his faults, his follies, and "the passionate emotion with which he regarded his

fate," his naturally devotional temperament inclined him to look upwards to that light, shining as a far-off beacon to draw him higher and higher to heaven.

But to return to Klopstock. That Klopstock had an almost keener appreciation of the sympathy that existed between himself and Meta, and the possible connection of the seen with the unseen, may be gathered from the following passages, also from the letters written by Klopstock to his departed Meta :—

"Of this I am convinced, that it makes a part of thy present happiness to remember what can never be forgotten by me—the grace that I received at the time when I was forced to take leave of thee. Thou must have seen in my face the joy which God gave me. . . . My soul was highly exalted. . . . I should have cried, 'Thanks-giving, and worship, and praise be to the All Wise and All Merciful!' May this still be my ruling thought, and be that which thou shalt first hear of me—if, indeed, thou canst hear of me before my death. The angels concern themselves with many things relating to mortals, and perhaps with more than we believe; or perhaps the first of our friends who goes to heaven will tell thee what I now write."

Even if Meta could not hear of him before his death, he still rested upon her sympathy; but in his later letters, which have already been quoted, he expresses a growing confidence in the assurance that Meta hovered near him. He goes on:—

"The second night came the blessing of thy death (till then I had considered it only as a trial); the blessing of such a death in its power came on me. I passed above an hour in silent rapture . . . the highest degree of peace with which I am acquainted was in my soul."

Meta herself, as we may perceive from her "Letters from the Dead to the Living," shares in the feeling that there is a mysterious link existing between the dead and the living—a mystery that might give us comfort did we but view it aright; did we but contemplate more freely and fully the doctrine of the resurrection in all its glorious promises; did we but attune our minds to believe in our existence hereafter as a continuity of ourselves as ourselves—which few bring themselves to realize; and if of our-

selves, why not also of those exalted affections that influenced us upon the earth?

Neither was the old idea of souls being created for one another set aside by Klopstock. We find him deriving great consolation, after the death of his wife, from his friend Funke's letters, in one of which occurs the following passage :—

"I am inclined, from various causes, to believe that in a future state the union of souls will still subsist, and will then be of a far more intimate and perfect kind. It must, indeed, be supposed that very few connections will continue as they were here formed; for how seldom do souls formed for each other meet.

'Now in far distant climes their lot is cast,
And now long ages roll their course between.'

"According to these ideas, those marriages must be considered as the happiest in which each party, in his proper sphere, has an equal capacity for perfection, and which have laid in this life the foundation of their eternal friendship. . . . And of this I am certain, that your connection is one of those few whose duration will be eternal. For this cause you were to meet on earth, and to possess each other as long as was needful to lay the deepest foundation for the tenderest and strongest—for an everlasting friendship. . . .

"We are called to high purposes. Human friendships are of little value if they serve not to kindle in us a desire for immortality; and without doubt they are given to us for that end; for when does the soul more ardently long after it than on the bosom of a friend whom we wish to possess for ever?"

Not an unreasonable theory, and a very beautiful and somewhat pathetic one; but certainly going against the old adage that "marriages are made in heaven"—a saying that has been allowed too literal an interpretation, it simply being a recognition of human destiny, of "what is to be will be, and cannot be altered."

The experience of earth, in fact, rather tends to favour Funke's theory that the souls destined for each other seldom meet on this side of the grave. In marriages, such as that in the instance before us, where there has been a perfect union of soul with soul, then begins the mortal—even in this life—part of his immortal happiness.

But, in the merely civil contracts that marriages often are, it is a consolation to hope for a more congenial state in the future. It also greatly settles the question of second, third, and sometimes even fourth, wives; not that the first wife need have been the one with whom the soul-union has been formed. Perhaps the Protestant Church has manifested some inkling of the theory, in refusing to consider marriage as a sacrament.

But one might go on theorizing upon the subject *ad libitum*, and find it not an uninteresting one. That Klopstock felt a curious interest in such speculations may be also learned from the singular episode in "The Messiah," wherein the son of the widow of Nain, and the daughter of Jairus—under the names of Semida and Cidli—meet upon earth; but are not, until they reach the heavenly regions, united in eternal bonds of love.

Sixty-six years since, Klopstock died! He has resolved all his hopes and doubts into certainties now. A hundred and forty-five years since, in the small house with the two pillars in front of the door, and close by the rocky eminence whereon the Schloss is built, Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock first saw the light. Little did the simple magistrate of Quedlinburg dream that the eldest of his eleven children was destined to become a man whom kings delighted to honour, or that the great and noble of the land, diplomatic corps, men of learning, and guards of honour, should swell his funeral train. And not the great and learned only, but, perhaps, better still, that vast sorrowing multitude, moved by a sentiment of solemn awe, who rose to do homage to the poet and to the good man.

Past Altona, to the village churchyard of Ottensen, where, forty years before, his Meta had been buried. There, under the waving lime-tree that had been planted upon her grave, they laid him beside his beloved one; his mortal part to lie there in the dust—"Seed sown by God to ripen for the day of harvest." To lie there till the "day of harvest," in the blessed hope that when that day should dawn, and the graves be opened, and the "dead bones live," then would Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock be found amongst the inheritors of the kingdom.

In the Bruhl at Quedlinburg there is a monument erected to the poet, and one can

well imagine the sweet-toned voice that issued from his lips, as one reads the benevolence and graciousness expressed in every feature of the noble countenance.

"If I were a tree," said my friend, "I should wish to be planted here."

She had read "Klopstock" in her youth. His "Messiah," fifty years ago, was better known than it is now. It has not proved the "Paradise Lost" of another language, as his friends and countrymen fondly hoped. It is too ponderous, too diffuse; and, though a strong religious spirit pervades it, it is too voluminous and heavy a poem to stand as a great and popular work.

Quedlinburg! We had seen Quedlinburg—where Klopstock was born, where he was at school, and upon which he ever looked with feelings of deep interest and affection.

From the windows of some of the beautiful rooms in the Schloss he has probably gazed, on the one side over the old town, and thought, as we did, of Henry the Fowler; or, on the other, over the wide plain that stretches towards the lovely Bodethal, visioning fair dreams of beauty and romance among the spirit-haunted regions of the Harz, conjuring up the giant's chase after the lovely princess, and shuddering as he pictured her noble steed leaping over the wide valley into which her persecutor was hurled.

Or, perchance, he has threaded his way from the pillared door of the small house in the Schlossplatz, through the narrow winding streets into the market-place, and, crossing over to the old Rathshaus, has revelled amongst its relics; pondering over the handwriting of Luther preserved therein, or touching reverently the carefully enshrined drinking cup of Venetian glass presented by Luther to some of the authorities of Quedlinburg.

One treads close upon the footsteps of the departed in these visits to their homes and haunts—so close that it seems as though one could still hear their footfalls not far off; and, perchance, it is but the invisible wall that separated Klopstock from his Meta that prevents our beholding their loving faces bent down to greet us in kindly sympathy at every turn. Who shall say nay?

For "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK III.—CHAPTER VI.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

THE Marquis of Malton and Mr. Robert Mortimer both left Madingley Chase next day for London. They did not choose to avail themselves of the pleasure of each other's society on their journey to town. Robert Mortimer left Barhampstead—the nearest station, distant some six miles from the Chase—by the morning train; and Malton, who, whatever the occasion, had strong objections to early rising, selected the afternoon train as preferable to the morning or evening one for conveying him to the metropolis. There were but three trains from Barhampstead to London in the day, and this served Sir Harold as a good excuse for making his journeys to and fro by road. He had a strong, old-fashioned predilection for the saddle and the post-chaise.

"When," the old Baronet was in the habit of saying, "I am outside a horse, or in a post-chaise, I know where I am, and what I am doing, at least. In a railway train one doesn't."

His brother Robert, however, had no such tastes, and was quite satisfied to run what Sir Harold thought the great risk of going up and down by the train. At the terminus he found his carriage waiting for him, and in the carriage was his wife. Feeling rather stronger and less nervous than was usual, Mrs. Mortimer had thought proper to drive to the station to meet her husband. The noise and bustle on the platform had affected her very delicate nerves—the delay was very tedious; and when at last the train arrived, and her husband presented himself at the door of the brougham, he found, to his great surprise, his wife there to receive him, wearied out, and languidly reclining on the back seat, while her little pet terriers occupied the front cushions.

"Oh, Florence, how do you do?" he said, taking his wife's hand. "This is quite unexpected."

"Yes," said his wife, bestowing upon him a faint smile; "I felt a little better to-day, and I thought the air might do me no harm. But I had no idea the train would be so long. We have been waiting more than

half an hour, I'm sure. Poor little thing—there, then, come to me!"

Robert Mortimer had put a couple of volumes he carried on one of the terriers, which action the injured animal resented by an angry snarl.

"I wonder you haven't killed those dogs with kindness long ago, Florence," he said. "How have you been since I have been at Madingley? Harold and Margaret sent their love, and so forth, of course."

"Oh, much as I usually am. You know I am never well, Robert."

"No—never well; though, perhaps, not so ill as you fancy. I think the change, and a few days at the Chase, would have done you good."

"I was not equal to the journey. I am sure, Robert, if you felt as I do, you would sympathize with me more."

Here Mrs. Mortimer made use of her cambric handkerchief. But her husband was not weak enough to display any sympathy for her ailments. The fact was, the subject was a little stale. He opened his book and cut a leaf or two with his paper-knife.

"I could go now for a few days, if I felt equal to it," Mrs. Robert said, presently.

"If you wanted the society of the servants you could, certainly, my dear," her husband replied. "Harold and Margaret are coming up to town in a day or two, and they will bring Mabel with them."

"To stay with us?"

"Now, do they ever stay anywhere else?"

"I wish, Robert, you would consult me about such things. It will be most inconvenient to me to have them, for a week at least."

"I proposed that they should come at once," said her husband, decidedly.

"Well, at least you might have written me a line before you did so. I declare I am treated like a mere cypher on all occasions."

Here Mrs. Robert again displayed the cambric handkerchief, and pressed her little dog to her bosom.

"I am sure you are much better to-day, Florence."

It was something rare for his wife to be well enough to complain.

When they reached their house in Grosvenor-square, he handed his wife and her dogs out of the carriage quite politely, as if nothing unpleasant had been said; and, following her up-stairs, said—



Once a Week.]

[May 14, 1870.

"Florence, you will give the necessary directions, so that we may be ready for Harold and Margaret."

"Of course I must, as they will be here so soon. I wish—but any wish I may express will not alter the arrangement you have made—I wish they were not coming for ten days or a fortnight."

"Their society will cheer you up, and make you forget your complaints. And you know you are quite fond of Margaret."

"I like your sister very much, Robert," replied Mrs. Mortimer, preparing to display her handkerchief; "she is always very—kind."

"There was a reason why I wanted to hurry them up to town," said Robert Mortimer, turning abruptly round, and looking into his wife's eyes. "I generally act reasonably and with a reason, I believe."

"What do you mean, Robert?" asked his wife, looking frightened.

"Only that Malton is—"

"What? Coming?"

"Doing his best to fall in love with Mabel Despencer."

"With Mabel?" cried the lady, in amazement. "But surely she does not return it—like him, I mean?"

"She might be dazzled by a coronet. Girls usually are. You would not have chosen me, perhaps, if you had been offered one."

"But do I understand that you are serious? Ungrateful girl, after all my boy's devotion to her. It can't have gone far, not farther than a little flirtation—eh, Robert?"

"Oh, no—not far," replied her husband, in his most satirical tone; "as you surmise, not far. All the young gentleman has done yet has been to ask her to become his wife."

"Proposed—already?"

"Yes. I know that is the case."

"And Mabel? of course she said she loved Charlie—had always been engaged to him? You know they have been, in a way, betrothed from their infancy. And Mabel is a good girl—and—and I am sure Charlie loves her devotedly."

"I don't believe he cares one straw for her. I never heard him say so. I never saw him do anything to show his affection. Your discernment, perhaps, has detected something I have failed to notice."

"I do not know what your son could

have done that he has not done. I am sure I am not to blame in the matter; for I have always told him it was her father's dying wish that she should marry him, and have always taught him to look upon Mabel as his future wife. And he has done so, I am sure; and I do not know what more he could have done."

"Does it not occur to you that he might have won the girl's affections?"

"I will never believe that Mabel can be so—so wicked as not to love him."

"I have reason to believe it, though. I know she told Malton she would not be disposed of in any other way than that in which she chose herself—or words to that effect."

"Your brother did not tell you of it?"

"No; Harold said nothing to me on the subject. It is enough that I know it."

"I am sure your brother—who is her guardian—desires that she should have Charlie; and he will never give his consent to—to anything else."

"He will never be asked," Robert replied, in a manner calculated to set his wife's fears at rest. "Mabel will marry our boy. The Despencer property is a clear fifteen thousand a-year."

"I should hate to see Charlie marry for money. I think such matches are sinful—horrible. I wish to see them love each other with true and enduring love. I would rather he should marry a pauper whom he loved than the richest heiress in England for her money."

"Ah! you are quite Quixotic in your notions, my dear Florence," said Mortimer, sarcastically. "I wish to gad some members of your family were more like you. Open-handed, generous, confiding. Your father now, for instance. Something might then be expected from him. Perhaps he would make Charlie a handsome annual allowance. I suppose you know he has not a sixpence beyond his expectations."

"Perhaps he would. I know his grandfather is very fond of him. He is quite first favourite with him."

"He has not a very extravagant way of showing his affection, then."

"Only yesterday my father was here, and saw him; and said how good it was of him to come every day to see me from Bloombridge."

"I shall take care he comes every day to see Mabel."

"He will of his own accord."

"I confess I wish they were married; but Harold, I know, would think them too young."

"Charlie will be twenty-one next birthday, and Mabel nineteen—let me see. Yes, nineteen."

"Then, at that rate, Malton is turned twenty-one."

"Yes; if you recollect, he was born a few days after we were married."

"H'm—no; I had forgotten the fact until you reminded me of it."

"It was so."

"Doubtless. Your memory on such points is very accurate," her husband replied, with a slight sneer. "He will be Duke of Fairholme before he is twenty-two, I think, in all likelihood; for I am told the Duke can't last many months. He is in a very bad state, and may die any day. However, even then Malton won't be a very rich man; and if he owned another El Dorado he would run through its treasures, probably, in less time than any other young spendthrift in England. I hear shocking accounts of him. Charlie can't have a more unsuitable companion. He can't afford to go the pace of Malton's beautiful set. So don't ask him here when Harold is in town any more than you are absolutely obliged in order to be decently civil."

The timid lady promised implicit compliance with this injunction. It was always her wish to shield her son from danger.

Charles Mortimer had not found any very insurmountable difficulty in passing that easiest of all competitive examinations—the collection of questions put to a young man of birth and fortune as a test of his fitness to serve his country in a crack cavalry regiment. He had passed it, and had been lately gazetted a Cornet in her Majesty's Nth Lancers, which regiment had its head-quarters at Bloombridge. Riding in from the Bloombridge Barracks to Grosvenor-square on the next day after his father's return from Madingley, he received the first intimation of his return to town from the sight of the well-brushed hat and gloves lying on the hall table.

"My father come back, then?" he asked of the servant who opened the door for him.

"Is that Mr. Charles?" asked another servant, coming out of the inner hall.

"Would you please step in to speak to your father?"

"Here's a row of some sort," Charles thought, as he prepared himself for the encounter.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCERNING A DEBUT.

GROBEY, who had watched over Bertie Grafton almost from her infancy—Grobey, who had gazed with a lover's devotion on each opening beauty in the fair flower he tended—Grobey, who had instructed her in the difficult art of dazzling the world, at last gave the word "Go," and Bertie went. It was with considerable trepidation and fluttering of her heart that the pretty, innocent girl counted the weeks, and then at last the days and hours, which intervened between her and her first appearance on any stage. She had almost hourly audiences of her instructor; she was drilled in her part until she could pick up the cue, without a second of hesitation, in any scene of the drama she was to take part in. She personated her character before her aunt a dozen times at least; and great was the good old lady's admiration of her niece's skill. She tried on her dress; she arranged her hair with blue ribands and with pink, by gaslight and by daylight, and finally decided to appear in the pink rosettes; and the veteran Grobey, who had, in his time, prepared a score at least of "young ladies and gentlemen desirous of adopting the stage as a profession"—as his professional advertisements set forth—felt at least as anxious to have his pupil fairly started as she did herself to get her first presentation to a thousand strange eyes over, and become used to public life.

The eventful day at last arrived. It was Grobey's annual benefit at the "Victoria;" and the playbills announced that, on this occasion, Miss Bertie Howard would make her first appearance in London in the character of Adelaide in the celebrated melodrama of "A Heroic Revenge." The part allotted to Bertie was one of no great importance; there were three other ladies in the piece, who all had more to do on the stage than she had. But it was admitted that it was a character prominent enough for a first attempt to win public favour, and contained, in one of the scenes, a pretty little bit of pathos for the actress who played Adelaide; and often Bertie and her mentor

had rehearsed the "bit of pathos" together—Grobey being, of course, the hero of the "Revenge."

The day seemed inexpressibly long, dull, and tedious to Bertie; but it wore gradually away. Tea-time came at last. An early, quiet little meal, eaten hastily in Mrs. Grafton's parlour. Erle, who was, not unnaturally, interested in Bertie's success, accepted Mrs. Grafton's invitation to tea and the "Victoria" afterwards. Grobey, pulling out his watch, said they must go; and, having given this signal, a four-wheeled cab was procured by Mary Ann, their domestic of all-work, who had declared many times during the day that she would have given all the world to have gone herself with the party.

Erle, whose interest in his humble friends was simple and unaffected, had arrayed himself in attire suited to the prominent position he was to occupy in the stage-box, and Mrs. Grafton had signalized the occasion by making her appearance in the shawl in which she had been married to Job Grafton, the departed fiddler, many years before. With her hair in an unusual number of curls, her rosy face the picture of content, her antiquated shawl, and faded needlework bag, she looked very like a little woman just turned out of Noah's ark, or some other venerable repository of the obsolete. Having first seen her niece safely into the vehicle, Mrs. Grafton next looked well at the horse, with a view to discovering if he were likely to run away. As it seemed much more probable that he would lie down than that he would tear off at a reckless pace, the careful woman was so far satisfied as to be willing to take her seat. Erle and Grobey followed her into the cab, and they speedily arrived at their destination—the stage-door of the "Vic," as the theatre was popularly and affectionately called. The "Vic" was one of those great houses frequented by the "people," as it is the fashion to term them. As Grobey was a great favourite, the house was crowded from the orchestra to the last and topmost seat in the spacious gallery, whence the multitude nightly obtained a bird's-eye view of triumphant Virtue and defeated Vice for the small sum of sixpence a-head. There was a good deal of whistling and caterwauling before the band struck up an enlivening and classical strain; but, with the first sound of the music, all the vast assem-

blage was quiet and perfectly well-conducted.

Erle took a seat by Mrs. Grafton's side, in that place of distinction, the manager's box; and Bertie sat with them through the preliminary little comedy, until it was time for her to hurry into the ladies' dressing-room, and assume the becoming habit of the Adelaide of the play.

The curtain fell upon the comedy. The band played a waltz or two. The curtain rose on the first scene of the "Heroic Revenge." Grobey's entrance in his favourite and much-admired part of Evelyn D'Arcy, the Hero, was the signal for a loud and prolonged burst of cheering. Advancing to the footlights, and placing his gloved right hand upon his heart, he bowed his profound acknowledgments, with becoming grace and elegance. The house was all enthusiasm. But Mrs. Grafton up there, screened by the latticed fretwork of the manager's box, saw and heard nothing. She only watched for the appearance of Bertie. Her sandwiches and sherry-flask, intended to support her during the fatigues of the evening, lay idle in her lap. Mopping the perspiration from her brow, she nervously waited for Bertie's entrance at the wing. Presently, in the second scene, she came. It was but to tell the Hero, her father, of the approach of strangers. She had but a few words to say, and she got through them very well. Grobey gave her an approving nod; then, marching up and down the stage, burst forth into a fine bass soliloquy, which he roared out with telling effect. The gods, the pit, the boxes, applauded him loudly when he had done his speech.

So the play went on. The scene with the "pretty bit of pathos" in it for the father and daughter came. Bertie had a speech to make, became nervous, lost heart, stammered, faltered, forgot her cue. The prompter's voice was audible above her own. She was the only person in the theatre who did not hear him. There was laughter. There were hisses. And, in its little way, the little *début* was a great fiasco.

CHAPTER VIII.

BLOOMBRIDGE.

IT was no punishment to Charles Mortimer to escape from the gloom and dullness that pervaded the mansion in Grosvenor-square. To leave behind him his father's unquiet eye was to be free—free

from an irksome *espionage*, and from the necessity to be respectably early in his hours, and decorous in his behaviour. At Bloombridge Barracks, where his regiment was stationed, he had rooms tastefully fitted up, and made bright and cheerful with flowers and hangings, and water-colour drawings of horses and the ladies of the ballet. Here, at one o'clock on a fine day in the height of the season, he sat wrapped in his elaborate Turkish morning gown, with his Havannah in his mouth, idly watching the people in the park passing below his window, which was gay with geraniums and heliotrope and yellow calceolaria. The remains of a substantial breakfast were on the table; and disposed about the room, in attitudes more comfortable than courtly, were five or six of Charles's intimate friends, who had favoured him with their company to breakfast. They had all been up to a late hour the night, or rather, the morning before. On the strength of a good win at loo, their host was particularly well pleased with himself and with everything about him. He looked by far the freshest of the company, as he sat basking in the window-seat.

"By Jove! Childers," exclaimed Malton, who was one of the party, "what are we to do? I am bored to death. I could not go blazing down to Bath this week in all the dust and heat. Thank goodness, we have got the Derby next week to amuse us."

"Ah, the Derby!" cried Childers. "I say, how are we going down, old boy?"

"I'll take you down in my new drag," said Malton. "I dare say I can do it without spilling you."

"Spill us!" exclaimed Mr. Jack, in derision; "why you can drive nearly as well as your father could, and he was the best hand at a team in the world, you know."

"I think I shall do, Jack," replied Malton, with his little thin smile.

"Well, Charlie—Mortimer!"

"Mortimer! Malton is calling to you," said Childers, to their host, who still sat in the window.

"Well; what now, Fred?" he asked.

"Will you go down to the Derby with me, in my drag—all you fellows?"

"Thank you. I'm going to tool down with the Nth, you know—as a matter of course, in our own turn-out."

"Dam! Well, some of you fellows—"

"We shall be happy to give you some lunch on the hill, Malton."

"Sha'n't want it, my boy—take my own—better than yours, for five!" he cried, stretching his arm out as he offered the bet.

"Yes; when it starts, I dare say," said Mortimer; "but, you know, it will never reach Epsom if you hold the ribands."

"Well!—all right; five hundred to five it does. Come! Are you on?"

"No bet—not good enough."

"What is all this wow about?" asked a little gentleman in a pink and white shirt, with enormous gold studs, in the form of horses' heads, down the front. He wore, also, a profusion of rings on his fat, white fingers—signets, and half-hoops, and single stones. He was attired in the daintiest of flowered-satin wrappers, and had evidently just left his chamber, and was now walking round the breakfast-table with a view to finding something he liked still remaining.

"I'll have a devilled dwumstick done," he said, speaking to a servant. "I say, you fellows have finished vewy early, or I'm a little late."

"That's nothing new, Fitzboodle," said Childers.

"Well, I hate to be disturbed before I've had my sleep out; and when I have to get up for pawade, you know, I can't have my sleep out; so, when I don't have to go on pawade, I take it out, you know."

"And where was Mr. F. last night?" said Childers, taking Fitzboodle by the collar of his dressing-gown.

"Never mind, Childers. I was not losing my money to you fellows at bwag, was I? Ah! here's my dwumstick. Devilled dwumstick is what I like for bwakfast."

And Mr. Fitzboodle sat down to his meal, for which he had a pretty good appetite. Some time after, when he had despatched his drumstick, and was amiably sucking inspiration from a hubble-bubble, Childers repeated his question.

"Well, if you must know, I was at the theatre."

"Which theatre?" asked one of the party.

"Never mind, my dear fellow," responded Fitzboodle, with a knowing wink, implying that he desired to keep the matter a secret.

"Don't be cruel, Fitz. Come, tell us."

"Well, the Vaviety, then."

"And what is there going on there?"

"It's a house I hate. It is always slow and stupid."

"It is not slow and stupid now, I pwo-mise you," said Fitzboodle, with animation;

"they've got a gorgeous burlesque—such dswesses! such girls!"

"I'd have laid a thousand pounds to sixpence," said Malton, "on a burlesque. Fitz never goes anywhere else."

"I'll tell you why Fitz goes to the Vawiety," said Fitz himself; and, of course, he was the best authority in the world on the subject. "He goes to the Vawiety because he has found out a great attwaction there."

"What is it?" cried all his friends.

"It's a girl. She can't act much, or that sort of thing; but I don't care about that. I'm not clever myself."

"What is she like?"

"By Jove, sir, she's like—what's her name, you know—Venus. She's beautiful. I think I'd marry her to-morrow—if she'd have me."

"Known her long, Fitz?"

"Sly fellow."

"Always on some good thing."

"I've only seen her thwec or four times."

"Ever spoken to her, Fitz?"

"Never. I haven't had the chance."

"What's her name?" they all inquired.

"Her name is—is—dam, my memowry for names is dweadful. I know it so well. Tomlin, feel in the pocket of my dwess coat for the playbill."

When the Rimmel-scented card was brought by the servant for his master's inspection, the name of the actress who had fascinated him was Bertie Howard.

"I vote we all go and see her this evening," said Childers.

The proposal met with general support.

"We'll send about a box," cried Malton, holding in his hand a mighty flagon of Badminton. "Meanwhile, Mr. Fitzboodle and gentlemen, here's to Miss Bertie Howard."

And the cool and delicious cup passed round from hand to hand.

A VILLAGE MAY-DAY IN 1870.

MAY set in this year with what Horace Walpole would have called "its accustomed severity." In '69 there was a piercing nor'-easter to represent the "ethereal mildness" which, by poetic injustice, has been assigned to the season. In 1870 we had not only the usual May-day nor'-easter, but also driving rain and pelting hail, with alternations of gleaming sunshine and transient rainbows.

In the little church of our village—not Miss Mitford's—where we were worshipping on May-day morning, the hail rattled so heavily on roof and window that the voice of the preacher was nearly drowned by what the penny-a-liner calls "the fury of the elements." We were reminded of this the following morning, when the village children, according to their pretty custom, came with their "garland," gay with its flowers and ribbons, and with its three or four dolls, the chief of which is the modern representative of the goddess Flora in the Roman festival of the *floralia*. The wind, on that Monday morning, was still in that bleak quarter of which all the logic and eloquence and poetry of Charles Kingsley could not enamour us; and as the little girls, with their winter "comforters" round their necks, stood in a group, and held the long stick across which their garland was hung, they sang the old glee, "Hail, all hail, thou merry, merry month of May!" It seemed to us that the more appropriate words to the pretty tune would have been these:—

"Hail, all hail, thou miserable first of May!

You really hail'd this year on that day;

And so, with truth, we can 'sing or say'

Our May-day song and roundelay—

Hail, all hail, thou miserable first of May!"

Soon after these children had sung their song and been recompensed with money, and had taken away themselves and their garland to another quarter, there came another bevy of village children with another garland from another parish, and they sang the old May-day song:—

"Good morning, lords and ladies,
It is the first of May;"

which was not the case, for it was the second of May, and we were neither lords nor ladies; but, with more truth, they concluded the verse:—

"We've brought you round the garland,
It looks so very gay."

They then delivered themselves of the following ornithological statement:—

"The nightingale she sings by night,
The cuckoo she sings by day."

But, before we had time to demur to the choice of the verb "sings" as applied to the unmusical two-notes of the cuckoo, who "told his name to all the hills," the song

was brought to a sudden conclusion with the lines:—

“So, fare you well, we must be gone,
We wish you a happy May.”

And, after being rewarded, they went, and their places were soon occupied by a third bevy of village children from another neighbouring parish, who, of course, brought their garland with them. It had its branch of hawthorn, but there were on it May-buds only; and no blossoms were ready to greet the May-day of 1870. Last year, the hawthorn bloomed early, thanks to a burst of very hot weather in the middle of April; and I gathered it in full blossom on April 24th. I referred to this in a note on the hawthorn in the “Table Talk” of *ONCE A WEEK*, May 15, 1869, p. 394; and, in the next note to that, I spoke of the common error of confounding the hyacinth with the blue-bell, an error which is more widely spread than might at first be thought possible. I was reminded this year of both those notes in “Table Talk;” for when I had commented on the hawthorn in bud, but not in blossom, I said to one of the little damsels, “But you have got some hyacinths! they are the first that I have seen this year.” Upon which, the May-Queen, with an air of correction, said, “If you please, sir, them are blue-bells!”—a flower which, as it does not grow in this part of the world, I will venture to say she has never seen in the short span of her life.

They then sang their song, the words of which were well known to me, for I had often heard them. They are curious, and of some antiquity; and, like the Homeric ballads, have been handed down by oral tradition, and, probably, with many modern accretions. They begin with the verse:—

“Here comes us poor Mayers all,
And thus we do begin,
To lead our lives in righteousness
For fear we should die in sin.”

This theological strain is continued for another verse or two, and is then changed into a statement that the poor Mayers had been wandering all the night, in order to secure the branch of May which they had brought to place before the door of the house:—

“It’s only a sprout, but it’s well budded out,
By the work of the Almighty hand.”

After this, there is a very singular inter-

mixture of pious moralising on life, death, and repentance, and very plain intimations that a “drop of something to drink” would be acceptable:—

“Awake, awake, my pretty maids all,
Out of your drowsy dream;
And step into your dairies all,
And fetch us a cup of cream.

If it’s only a cup of your sweet cream,
Or a mug of your brown beer,
If we should live to tarry in the town,
We’ll call another year.”

Either sweet cream or brown beer—the little Mayers were not at all particular. But I did not give them either. I gave all three companies, however, permission to come to my garden in the afternoon, where they played at various games—every now and then having to seek shelter from sudden storms; and then they had gingerbread and currant wine. After that they went to their own respective villages, there to have tea at a certain cottage—the feast being their own treat to themselves, paid for out of a portion of the money they had collected in the morning when going round with their garland. Then, after tea, according to their annual custom, they went out into the village street to “throw at the garland,” which for that purpose is hung from the centre of a rope made to pass over the street by being tied from the tops of two high poles. But it is not *at* the garland, but over it, that they really throw, with halfpenny balls, bought for that purpose out of the proceeds of their morning’s gains. This throwing backwards and forwards seems to give them a great amount of harmless enjoyment. There is also a swing slung from one of the posts to a supplementary side-post; and, when I last looked out in the waning daylight of that cold evening, I caught sight of the legs and petticoats of the Queen of the May, swung skywards, at a considerable altitude; and I thought that, if all village revellers could find themselves “elevated” in as simple a manner, Sir Wilfrid Lawson would have no occasion to trouble himself as to the deleterious effect of “intoxicants”—*i.e.*, drugged and adulterated liquids—upon our rural population; and he might even reconcile himself to listen with equanimity to the little Mayers asking for their cup of sweet cream or mug of brown beer.

As a postscript to the foregoing, I may

say that, in speaking of the cold month of May, 1869, in the "Table Talk" of this magazine for June 12th, p. 482, I there quoted several local proverbs and sayings relative to the subject. But I did not mention the following, which has been told to me by an old cottager:—

"A cold May
Is good for corn and hay."

THE MEETING.

WITH Time I turn—years backward flow,
Again that golden shore I trace,
Where, in the light of long ago,
I first beheld thy face.

Soft summer airs waved warm and light;
A solemn psalm, breathed o'er the bay,
Came like the choral march of Night,
Ascending far away.

The sun burned downward to the deep,
And glowed through many a purple bar;
While, like a virgin from her sleep,
Arose the Evening Star.

There oft had I, with care oppressed,
Forgetful, dream'd of other lands;
And thou had'st sought a realm of rest,
Along those silent sands.

As mists that melt in azure skies,
Thy tears fell fast; such woe was mine;
Like magnets glanced thy streaming eyes,
And drew my soul to thine.

TABLE TALK.

CRITICS HAVE FOUND FAULT with the employment of names in fiction which are intended to suggest the character of the persons who bear them. For example, with the Dr. Dryasdust of Sir Walter Scott's prefaces, or Mr. Disraeli's Lord Catchimwho-can. There is some reason for using the names of common life, even in a romance. But, however good Mr. Dickens's names are, they seldom suggest anything of the peculiar turn of mind of the characters who bear them, that may be relied upon with any tolerable degree of certainty. To the already remarkable collection of surnames to which the first part of the great novelist's new story introduced us, are now added some others equally uncommon. In "Edwin Drood," for the present month, we make the acquaintance of a Mr. Honeythunder, and a Mr. Grewgious, and two orphans named Landless. Add these to our April friends, the Topes, Crisparkles, Tishers, Twinkletons, Sapseas, and Durdleses of Mr. Dickens's new novel, and one cannot help

thinking that when his characters meet altogether—if ever they do—the first thought that must occur to them will be, "What extremely funny names we have all got." Without seeming in too great a hurry to criticise, we may say that the interest of "Edwin Drood," Part II., is not nearly equal to that of Part I.; that Mr. Fildes does not seem, in "Edwin Drood," to have improved upon the pretty drawings he furnished for the pages of ONCE A WEEK. And, lastly, we may observe that, although Mr. Dickens's notoriously eccentric views of English orthography might easily lead him into writing "chimnies" for *chimneys*, we are surprised to find his readers passing "skillfully" for *skilfully*, at page 53.

A CORRESPONDENT: In the article, "Notes on Imitation and Plagiarism," in No. 122 of ONCE A WEEK, the writer says:—"There is no internal evidence in Dickens's books to show that he has ever read anything except Smollett." The impression left on my mind when I read "Pickwick" first, many years ago, was that the author had, in his boyhood, been an admirer of the "Vicar of Wakefield," and had unconsciously re-portrayed, in his great picture, some of the lineaments of the good Vicar; but the tone and colouring of these strokes of art were all his own. There is in "Martin Chuzzlewit" an idea so strikingly similar to one in the "Vicar," as to be worth citing. The "Philosophical Vagabond," in describing the miserly young gentleman to whom he was appointed travelling tutor and governor, says:—"Such curiosities on the way as could be seen for nothing, he was ready enough to look at; but, if the sight of them was to paid for, he usually asserted that he had been told they were not worth seeing." At page 132-3 of the original edition of "Martin Chuzzlewit," Jonas is represented as showing the sights of London to the Misses Pecksniff; and "he showed them as many, in the way of bridges, churches, streets, outsides of theatres, and other free spectacles, in that one forenoon, as most people see in a twelvemonth. It was observable in this gentleman that he had an insurmountable distaste to the insides of buildings; and that he was perfectly acquainted with the merits of all shows in respect to which there was any charge for admission, which, it seemed, were every one detestable, and of

the very lowest grade of merit." Though this idea might have occurred to anyone, without having read the wanderings of the "Philosophical Vagabond," still there is a similarity in the two characters worthy of note.

ONE OF THE DAILY NEWSPAPERS, when speaking of Miss Bouverie's "Costume Recitals" at St. George's Hall, said:—"There is something of novelty as well as courage in the assumption by a lady of the character of Hamlet;" but that "there is no physical reason why the melancholy and philosophical hero of Shakspeare's greatest play should not be represented by one of the softer sex." With Miss Marriott, Hamlet is a favourite character; and Miss Cushman was expected to have added it to her rôle of Shakspearean delineations, as a companion to her Romeo. But it may be well to remind the reader that Hamlet was a favourite character of the great Mrs. Siddons, and was usually selected by her for performance on her benefit nights. For some reason, however, she never represented the character on the London stage, but restricted her performance of it to provincial theatres. After her retirement from the stage, which occurred in 1812, Mrs. Siddons gave, at the Argyle Rooms, many readings from Shakspeare and Milton, Collins's "Ode to the Passions," &c. Henderson's readings (of Cowper's "John Gilpin," &c.) at Freemasons' Hall had been attended with marked success; and to these readings and recitations by Mrs. Siddons and Henderson may be attributed the rise of that now popular species of entertainment.

THE LAUREATE HAS TOLD US what is "a sorrow's crown of sorrow," and we know that there are diversities in grief, as in other things. A country rector, the other day, had this undoubted fact placed before him in a new light. He was endeavouring to impart some little consolation to a poor woman who had suffered a heavy bereavement, and was in great trouble; and he was showing her how affliction may come in various ways to all people, whatever might be their station in life; and that the queen in her palace and the labourer's wife in a cottage were, in this respect, on the same level. "No, sir," said the woman; "if you'll excuse me for saying it, there's a great difference. There's a fat sorrow and a lean

sorrow; and a lean sorrow's far harder to bear than a fat sorrow. Mine is a lean sorrow." The rector acknowledged the force of the argument, pointed as it was by dire poverty and stern necessity.

IF, ACCORDING TO DEAN SWIFT—when discoursing of Brobdingnag—he who could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together, surely Mr. Thomas Cook, the "tourist manager," ought to earn the gratitude of his fellow-men for taking his scores of excursionists to spots where hitherto the tourists have been found solitary, or in couples, and not gregarious. Yet, although Mr. Cook may, in some sort, be reckoned as a benefactor to his race, we would caution him to avoid imitating the example set him by the enterprising firm of Moses, and establishing a poet. In a recent tour to the East, it would seem that Mr. Cook's excursionists were accompanied by the Rev. Jabez Burns, D.D., who would appear to have accompanied the expedition in the character of Improvisatore, or Music Hall Champion Comique—for, apparently, we must ascribe to the muse of Dr. Jabez Burns the poem printed at the end of Mr. Cook's "Help-book to Eastern Tours," in which we have the following lines:—

" 'Claim your luggage!'—here's a shock!—
'Yours is gone to Antioch!'
Pilgrims holy, Red Cross Knights,
Had you e'er
The least idea,
Even in your wildest flights,
Of a steam trip to Judea?"

These rhymes will prove that the writer's "ear for poetry" must be a cockney's ear, and that there is still a wide gulf between the rhymes of Dr. Jabez Burns and the poetry of Robert Burns.

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CHAPTER XVI.



TRAIN
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visions of the night before—a series of pictures, as they appeared to him, painted in the most vivid colours, and which he seemed to be looking back to wistfully, through a cold, dull, chilly medium—like the gray dawn which was before him now. He was a little impatient and put out at this interruption to his enchantment—unconsciously, at least, for he did not put the idea in words. So he journeyed on through the day, low-spirited, very lugubrious; until, about noon, he began to draw near to that eternal yellow fog—Manchester—which seemed to him as if he was entering some thick miasma, over a marsh. There is nothing more dispiriting than such

an entrance. The train seems to run for miles, at full speed, through dim and spectral lines of factories and chimneys, all reeking with yellowish-green fog. The whole has a Plutonic air.

He was set down at an hotel, and was shown up to Miss Effingham's room. There he found her—pale, sad, but more beautiful than ever, and with that strange look of tender sympathy on her face, which was her great charm, more developed. It won him back at once. The glories of the mansion he had left behind became dim: he was in a new realm all of a sudden. He was her slave again.

"I have sent for you," she said. "I told you that I am going away. You may never see me again. But, first, you must tell me—do you hold to what you have said—and even sworn—that you are mine for ever? It was you who came to make that declaration to me voluntarily."

"And do I wish to withdraw from it? You must not leave thus—it is childish! You must stay—stay with me."

"And if I did, would you be with me? You have not been won over—bought over—by these people—intimidated by your father?"

"Never—never!" he said, fervently. "I am yours always—bound to you for ever. I tell you, you must not go. I cannot endure it. I cannot live without you."

"Then let me put you to this test," she said, quickly. "I go from here to-day. If I go, I shall never see you again. I shall cast my lot in that great continent where there is a true field for talent and genius; where my ambition can be gratified; where I shall rise to fame, and win glory and wealth and power. That is what I want—power for certain dear ends of my life. There is but one thing that would link me to this continent—one thing alone that would make me turn my eyes to the east. That is you!"

"Oh! tell me about this!" he cried, passionately. "What would you have me do? I cannot lose you. Do you wish me to go with you?"

"No; I would not sacrifice you. But I must not be sacrificed either: it would not be fair. If I go, taking with me an ever-lengthening chain of affliction—fond longings, miserable looking back, fretful disquietudes, weary waiting—and then learn that you—like all men—have forgotten, have been bought into this Duke's family, what would then be left for me? Betrayed—abandoned! No; let all finish between us, or—give me some guarantee!"

"Anything in the world! Name it! Let me offer you my name and hand."

"That is what I mean. Mind, I do not ask you to take this step; but I offer you the alternative. Let all be at an end, or let all begin. I knew you would consent—that it would be idle to reason with you; for you are bound to me for ever—as you declared to me yourself. But still I do not hold you to this. I would rather you would shake yourself free of me."

There was something so romantic in all this, and she looked so noble, generous, and beautiful, that the old rush of feeling came back upon him; he saw her as she was in Pauline—ever fascinating.

"I could not give you up for the whole world! I will go with you to the New World, and leave all behind."

"Then I never see you again after this moment," she said. "I cannot leave thus. I have sworn it. I shall not have your ruin on my soul. No; I will agree to all else."

The ship did not go until the next morning; so there was a long, enchanting evening. The old glories—the old lights—filled his eyes, dazzling them. She was the Circe—enchantress. He was intoxicated by the draughts held to his lips.

The next morning came; and to a small Manchester parish church the party proceeded. The youth did not pause to think that a ceremony of that kind cannot be gone through *à l'improviste*; that there are certain preparations—certain intervals. He thought of nothing but her. She, his departing queen, going away from him across the seas, whom he might never see again. It was such a romance; there was the spell that held him. He seemed, to himself, to be walking in a dream—scarcely know-

ing what he was doing, save drinking in enchantment.

It was over; and the actress, Lydia Effingham, was his wife!

He hardly realized what he had done—indeed, it was not real at all. The strangest part was, that he felt no pang at parting; that, too, seemed in due course. The ship was to sail at one o'clock; and it was now twelve. The actress's eyes wore a strange expression of excitement and exultation. She spoke strangely to him, as he thought.

"If your father was only here. What would he say? I think it would set him mad with fury and disappointment."

"Heaven forbid!" said the young man. "And he must not know it. It would kill him, I believe—and God forgive me!"

They were now at the packet. About them was the bustle and fuss of departure—luggage, passengers. Yet she talked calmly—in a strangely reflective tone.

"He is ambitious, and would sacrifice you and your happiness to his plans. Depend upon it, in his life and career there have been those whom he has had no scruple of killing in this way, with shock and execution, because they happened to cross his path. No, no; I have no scruples about that. Depend upon it, there is compensation in all these things. That punishment, though delayed, comes at last."

He listened wondering and shocked.

"Punishment!" he exclaimed. "Punishment!"

"Yes," she said, almost fiercely, "punishment—or justice—if that is a better word. But see—good heavens!—look!"

They were on the deck of the tender. The sailors were beginning to clear the vessel.

"See—your father! He is suspicious—afraid that I will not keep to my bargain—"

Charles looked round, and saw his father standing on the pier, watching them. It was like an apparition. For the moment, he seemed to himself a sort of malefactor escaping—that here was the detective, ready to seize him—one who knew his whole story. After the strange dream of the morning—for dream it must be—this delusion seemed to seize on him, and most naturally. And he stood there aghast and trembling.

CHAPTER XVII.

BUT his father was smiling and nodding at them, as if in approval. In a moment he was on board, standing next them.

"I hope you will have a fine voyage, Miss Effingham."

She looked at him with a strange expression of unconcealed dislike, which struck her young husband with a feeling of dismay. Indeed, she seemed latterly to be changing into some new figure and new character. She seemed to be repelling him more than drawing him to her. It was like one of those enchantresses who used to bewitch men first, then reveal themselves as witches, even fishy and scaly. Her look at Mr. Benbow was defiant—full of hatred and malice.

"That is not a genuine wish," she said. "Forgive me if I am unpolite enough to say I believe your wish to be, that this steamer were never heard of again—took fire, or were sunk. Come, at this moment let us have no subterfuge—nothing of my profession, which is *acting*. You know well why I go."

Mr. Benbow was so taken back, he knew not what to answer, diplomatist as he was. The young husband remained looking at her.

"Your wishes may be carried out. Far off, over there, there are so many chances against me. Death seems to work against us with double force when we are at a distance, or driven from our own country. You think you have saved him. Well, perhaps you have. Perhaps you have not. Time alone can tell."

Mr. Benbow knew all that time could tell, and could do, pretty well, and answered, with a smile—

"You will have a great many things to think of now. You will be taken into a whirl of ambition and absorbing things. I shall look out eagerly through all the papers for news of the rising actress. We may reckon confidently on some *éclatante* success; and then, perhaps, you will thank me, who has been the humble instrument. Perhaps you will *both* thank me. We old people are wiser, and see farther. You will both be laughing at all this one day."

Again, it was something highly dramatic to see this complacent ignorance of events in the presence of those two actors, who knew so much: this veteran schemer thinking that he had the key of the position in his hand—nay, that he was on the walls, triumphant, conquering—and that he had them both at his mercy.

It was time to go. All those who were

not passengers must leave for shore. "Now, then!" was the cry. He could be generous, and went his way, leaving them to exchange a last farewell.

"I don't expect that you will see me again. I have a presentiment of it. Never mind, you have behaved nobly—generously too. It would be best for us both that you never heard of me again; for I am not, as I told you before, the angel that your romance makes me out. Nothing of the kind. If you only knew—I am the vilest wretch—only an instrument all the time, drawn on by fate to carry out inexorable decrees. Good-bye. Think of me not. Try and forgive me, and think it is not I, but something more powerful, that brings all this about."

"Now, then!" rang out again, and he had to rush ashore. Indeed, he did not feel that he would wish to go with her. Some strange feeling seemed to hold him back. He was confused—dazed. He seemed like one who had fallen down a precipice, and lay stunned and bleeding at the bottom. He watched the tender moving slowly off, and her figure on the deck, until it was out of sight.

His father drew a sigh of relief as it disappeared. Now all was "plain sailing." He should strike while the iron was hot. Before two months the wedding shall have taken place. He was very kind and indulgent to his son, sympathizing with him heartily.

"My dear boy, I feel for you. It is hard—very hard. Once, at your age, I thought my heart would have broken under such a thing. But indulge your grief as much as you like—for she is a fine creature, and has behaved nobly. I can make every allowance. Try and distract your mind. I don't like to be sardonic—but, I give you my solemn word of honour, my belief is that that lady will have forgotten the whole thing in six months. She is a *professional*, recollect. Everything falls into *that*. However, I don't want to say a word against her; and I do not like you the worse, my dear boy, for you showing this feeling."

The son still said not a word. They were now at the hotel.

"Let us dine together, and then you can go back to the Duke's."

This roused his son.

"Go back there! I dare not, father!"

The other's brow grew contracted.

"Well, not to-night, if you insist on it ; but I only wish it for your comfort. What's this? A telegram for you."

It was from a friend staying at the Castle, and it ran :—

"Please, do not return. An unexpected event has taken place. The Duchess died this morning quite suddenly. Party all are leaving."

He put it into Mr. Benbow's hand, who almost uttered an execration as he read it.

"What does all this mean?" he muttered. "There is some infernal concatenation against me. You drivelling fellow, see what your follies have brought about. A few days earlier and we might have had all this settled, but for your infernal romance. Now there will be a break of months, and we shall have to begin all. I'll never forgive you this. You, with your low blackguard tastes and idiotic fancies. You have lost me the game, I know you have, you fool ! Don't speak to me. You had better just take the next packet, and go off after that low mountebank woman. I don't care what becomes of you now."

But this was a relief for Charles. It was a wretched journey home for both. But reprieve had come for Charles.

Some dreary months went by ; during which, however, he did not relax his hold of the revered divinity. Even out of that affliction he contrived to get some comfort, some assistance towards the forwarding of his darling plans. First a letter of condolence—short, but sympathising, and needing no answer. Then a letter, still condoling, but with an offer to perform some service—the necessity he had with infinite pains worked out, and which was gratefully accepted by the disconsolate Duke. It came so admirably well-timed—it was a real service, as Mr. Benbow knew. Nothing could fit in better. He never relaxed a moment on that little foundation he built ; and presently his Grace was writing to say—

"MY DEAR BENBOW—I cannot say what service you have been to me. I shall never forget it. Could you manage to come to me at Banff? There is a rather delicate matter for which, under my bereavement, I am wholly unfitted."

Could he come? Of course he could.

He was there for a fortnight, getting ready the ground—consoling the bereaved husband—sowing the seed. In six months it was found that the bereavement was not such a serious drawback to Mr. Benbow's plans, after all.

Eight months had gone by—ten months—a year. Surly Time had healed the poignant sorrow. He could see a few people now at the Castle—it would distract their sorrows. And, after all, did he not owe something to his children—to the Lady Rosa, for instance? Accordingly, he was persuaded : a few people—just a few—to keep up his spirits: it was a duty. It was incumbent on him to make an exertion.

A few, then, were asked. Among others, the Earl of Gillingham—a political star—and his daughter—a tall, elegant, gracious creature. The bereaved Duke left all to his friend Benbow, whose kindness under the bereavement he should never forget. Lady Frances Tynern was charming ; her figure—where was her real strength—exquisite, with a quiet and refined air, if aristocratic. The diplomatic Mr. Benbow, with a wonderful instinct, took this matter in hand. He put it all on duty—duty to the country—to the estate—to the family—to the Duke himself. And presently the world was astonished to learn that a rapid and strictly private marriage had taken place between the young and conventionally beautiful daughter of the Earl of Gillingham and the Duke. This Earl was political—had two sons in Parliament ; and thus the interest was admirably fortified.

"You and your son Charles," said the bridegroom, departing for Paris, "must be here on our return. My dear Benbow, I am your friend always."

In the meantime, the eyes of the latter gentleman had always been turned towards the great continent of the West. American papers from New York and the leading towns were regularly sent to him, and friends of his wondered to see this new-born interest in the affairs of that country ; for he had been always specially narrow-minded, thinking only of home politics, and of the little microcosm of Whigs and Tories, and office, and "getting on." His eyes always turned to the theatrical announcements ; and, after three or four months, he began to give it up ; and finally the idea occurred to him that she might be dead. In this notion, however, he was to

be disappointed; for once, by the merest accident, his eye fell upon a paragraph in which it was stated that the new London actress, with whom Mr. Calhoun Sprot had contracted an engagement, was lying seriously ill, and not expected to recover; under which circumstances, Mr. Calhoun Sprot had contracted another engagement with the fascinating Brunette, &c. How his heart fluttered at this! And he passed it over to his son to read, with a compassionate "My poor Charles! I knew it would end in this way."

But, in truth, he had been rather puzzled by the demeanour of that young man. He had sunk into a sort of settled melancholy, which his father was yet acute enough to see was not the longing of love, or the yearnings of a love-sick boy separated from his flame. It was a dull despondence; a restless sort of depression that knew not what to turn to. Neither did he seem to take interest in that far-off continent. He even asked to be allowed to go to Paris for a month; to which his father cheerfully consented.

The truth was, the awful responsibility of the step he had taken so suddenly and so rashly; the terrible train of confusion which it was certain to bring with it; the danger which was hanging over his head; the impossibility of resisting; his own helplessness—all this was only now beginning to dawn upon him. Then, too, there was the terrible change in the woman herself—the sudden sense of repulsion which had been born in him, and had swallowed up all the old tenderness. He only thought of her now with a sort of terror; and before him hung the terrible scene of revelation which must come sooner or later. But this was not that Sword of Damocles—which is the title of this little narrative—that was to hang, as will be seen, over his father's head.

MAY CUSTOMS OF THE BLACK COUNTRY.

WHATEVER else may have been recorded of that *terra incognita* known as the Black Country, it is certain that its folk-lore has yet to be written. Strange as it may seem, no district in England is richer in traditions of olden customs, and would better repay the antiquary's research; yet, for lack of a chronicler, many of these traditions are perishing for ever—their only

preservers being our old men, whose silvery locks and hoary aspects proclaim life's twilight and decay. Why it is that no local Dryasdust has reaped the harvest of information that awaits him is unaccountable, seeing that to record ancient customs and preserve traditions is to add to that stock of knowledge which constitutes the most instructive and interesting study a man can pursue—enabling him, as it does, to trace the growth of domestic life in a nation, which is hidden beneath its civil and military history. Awaiting the appearance of some local Brand, we offer a few observations and facts respecting the celebrations of May in the olden time.

May-day, with its glorious associations, first of all presents itself for notice.

Early on May-day in the morning—as dear old Stow quaintly expresses it—as the first warm streak of light appeared at the eastern gate of heaven, a watchman stationed in the church tower proclaimed the joyful fact by blowing a horn to awake the people, and by ringing what was termed the "May-day bell." In a few moments the people sallied out in bands, armed with hatchets and knives, in search of the Maypoles. Having thus performed his duty, the watchman was relieved at his post by the regular ringers, who were speedily in attendance, and who rang the May-peal until the first hawthorn bough was brought into the village, when it was decorated with ribbons, and hoisted on a pole to the summit of the tower, in the midst of triumphant shouts. As the different bands of Maypole gatherers returned from their search, their trophies were laid on the village green until all had arrived, when the largest was selected. The bush was then adorned and placed in a conspicuous position, and became the centre of mirth and festivity. The pole was then christened by the "crier," who, amid much flourishing of trumpets, repeated in a loud voice this doggerel:—

"Up with the Maypole, high let it be;
If none say me 'Nay,' I will now christen thee—
The Maypole, the Maypole, thy name it shall be.
Now all you good folks, come and shout with me,
Hurrah! Hurrah!"

The Queen of the May was afterwards chosen from among the village maidens—the parson and squire taking as great an interest in the election as the rudest villager. This ceremony over, and the Queen being duly installed on her leafy throne, the ringers

rang the Queen of May's peal—the peal being sometimes composed in honour of the occasion. A youth was then chosen, and, being duly ornamented with ribbons and May-blossoms, was sent to swear fealty for the rest. Approaching her Majesty, he bent his knee, and repeated the following verse:—

“Welcome, welcome, fair Queen of May,
You shall be our Queen to-day;
Rule us light, and rule us well,
Then we swear we won't rebel.”

This done, the village musicians, who had long been restlessly waiting to begin, struck up a lively tune, making up in energy what they lacked in time; and, under music's inspiring strains, however badly executed, young and old joined hand in hand and danced round the Queen and pole, repeating some verses of which this couplet formed the chorus:—

“All round the May-pole we will trot,
From the very bottom to the very top.”

With the spoils won from Nature's fair domains every house in the village was ornamented; and, for the possession of certain maidens' handkerchiefs upon them, long and manly battles between the youth and chivalry of the village, later in the day, took place.

While the more enthusiastic of May-day's votaries sought, at early morn, May-boughs wherewith to adorn their dwellings, others sought the fields, to gather

“The dew-drops from the spangled lawn.”

These persons, however, be it noted, were of the softer—we do not use the term in an invidious sense—sex, who fondly believed that May-dew was invaluable in preserving a beautiful complexion, though early rising doubtless had more to do with the glow on the cheek than the dew. If certain females sought the springing sod for so laudable a purpose, certain males did so too—but for how different a purpose!—for, being armed with large bottles of spirituous liquors, they sought the farmhouses for a supply of milk, which they mixed with the liquors and drank—the beverage being then called “whey,” and the custom “whey-drinking.” This custom is still carried on by the iron-workers, who walk for miles on May-day morning into the country, and often return much the worse for the liquor they have imbibed.

The gathering of the May was paid for out of the churchwardens' accounts, as the

registers of the district prove. In Wolverhampton registers, amongst others, are these entries:—

1665.—For ye gathering of ye May,	£	s.	d.
May-poles, and for ye ringers,			
as was usual	0	15	9
1671-2.—For ringing and for music on			
May-day	0	12	6

In the registers of St. Leonard's, Bilston, are these items:—

	£	s.	d.
1689.—For May-day, May-pole, and for			
ale, &c.	1	2	6
1702.—For a May-pole and for ringers .	0	4	6

Nor was this parochial help all that the merry villagers received, for the squires of the villages gave a feast for all who chose to go—and whoever knew such an opportunity neglected?—on which occasion a man, dressed as a fool, had full liberty to play certain laughable pranks on the company, for the squire's and his party's amusement. He had also to propose the May-toast—a toast which varied in different villages. The one in use at Wednesbury, we are told, ran thus:—

“Here's a health to the merry month,
The merry month of May;
Drink deep, and pledge it in a cup
To drive all care away;
Pledge it all, both great and small,
Pledge it now, come, one and all—
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!”

We need not say that this invitation to the thirsty usually received a hearty response; for in those good old days Britons were extremely fond of “wassailing.” Besides these festivities attendant on May-day, the Black Country held another festival on May 29.

In a district so intimately connected with the romantic escape of King Charles, the “Merrie Monarch,” after the battle of Worcester, the antiquary might well expect to find relics of a custom which was generally observed in England in commemoration of that Prince's restoration to his father's throne. The people of the district could not help celebrating an event in the bringing about of which their gentry played so important a part; hence, we find that no sooner was the act passed, in 1660, “for a perpetual thanksgiving on the 29th of May, the day of his Majesty's nativity and restoration,” than the Wolverhampton church registers record:—

1661.—Given to ye ringers on May ye 29th	s.	d.
for ringing in honour of his blessed		
Majestic's most gracious restoration		
cion	3	0

In Bilston registers are these items:—

	s.	d.
1690.—For ringing ye bells on May 29th,		
and for ale for ye ringers	3	0
1698.—To ye ringers given (May 29)	2	6

On this day the schoolboys formerly had a holiday, which they spent in the following manner:—A number of them adorned their hats with oak-leaves, and assembled on the village green, where they were met by an equal number of boys without oak-leaves. A tournament, called the "Royal Oak Fight," then took place. A number of youths of each party, mounted on the shoulders of their fellows, and armed with wooden lances, and swords, then charged each other. The oak-leaf party was invariably successful, and the leader was then crowned, and called "King Charlie" for the rest of the day. The game of French and English, once so popular among schoolboys of this district, was derived from this custom.

It was also customary for the people on this day to pay visits to Boscobel and Bentley Hall, in commemoration of the events that occurred there, and as an illustration of their loyalty.

The month of May was considered in this district unlucky for marriages, the old people repeating a couplet which runs thus:—

"To be married in May
Brings bad luck that day."

Years ago, this superstition had such an influence on the people that, from a calculation we have made in the old churches' registers, the average marriages for May were only half as high as those of any other month. It may seem incredible, but only some five years ago a clergyman in the Black Country persuaded some friends of the present writer, who were to have been married on May 31st, to defer it until June 1st, quoting as a reason the foregoing couplet.

What can the people of the Black Country know of the perfume that rises beneath May's footsteps?—standing as they do at the roaring furnace, or toiling in the dismal mine. There seems to be no May for them. Winter, so far as barrenness and dreariness are concerned, reigns all the year round. It is true that here and there a hawthorn bush, leafless and hideously deformed, still remains, as if mocking the desolation it has been spared to witness; and, in old churchyards, sickly trees throw their

gaunt and withered branches into convulsions when some blustering wind sweeps round them; but these are no more like the glorious trees out in the country, miles away, than those which hang, at times, on the walls of the Royal Academy. And yet, amid this desolation, remnants of those olden customs still remain; and, when May-day comes round, the ironworkers go miles away into the country to fetch May-boughs wherewith to adorn the works' chimney; the collier to deck the pit frames and engines; while the carters draw, from the most extraordinary of hiding-places, ear-caps of white cloth, and many-coloured rosettes, with which to dress their horses.

THE BATTLE OF CRESSY.

A READING.

BY LITCHFIELD MOSELEY.

THE ever-memorable battle of Cressy was fought on the 26th of August, 1346.

Both the French and English armies having been greatly fatigued and harassed by forced marchings, it was three o'clock in the afternoon before the conflict commenced, the greater portion of the day having been spent in preparation.

The opposing forces were very disproportioned, the French being four times stronger than the English: indeed, some chroniclers go so far as to assert that there were six Frenchmen to each Englishman. But it must also be stated that the English were fresher and in much better condition for the encounter than their opponents. Just as the battle commenced there was a heavy fall of rain, which so relaxed the bowstrings of the French and Genoese archers, that they were rendered almost useless for a time; whereas the English bowmen were supplied with cases for their crossbows; and when the shower had passed over, they were favoured with a gleam of sunshine which served to dazzle the enemy, and for a short time great confusion prevailed in the French ranks. Observing this, the Prince of Wales led his men to the charge; when the French cavalry, commanded by the Count D'Alençon, suddenly wheeled, and began to hem them in. At this juncture, as the Prince appeared to be in imminent peril, a messenger was despatched for assistance to the King, who, with a strong reserve force, was watching the conflict

from the brow of an adjacent hill. On seeing the officer approach, Edward asked him if his son was killed.

"No, my Liege," was the reply.

"Then why have you come to me?"

"Because, Sire, the Prince is likely to be overcome in this fight, and he is greatly in need of help."

"Then return at once to those who sent you, and say that my son must look for no assistance from me to-day. Tell them, too, it is my wish that the boy should win his spurs; and if he is victorious, let it be entirely due to his own merit."

This reply being reported to the Prince, it inspired him and his soldiers with fresh ardour; and they fought so fiercely and vigorously, that before sunset the French army was totally routed, and in full flight. The loss sustained by the French was very severe, more than 30,000 of their men-at-arms being left dead upon the field, together with eleven princes, and upwards of a thousand noblemen and knights. That of the English was comparatively trifling.

The following is supposed to be a description by an eye-witness of the encounter:—

On Cressy's fair and verdant plain two hostile armies stand;
For France and England meet to-day upon the Frenchman's land.
On either side the combatants are marshall'd in array,
And wait their leaders' orders to commence the deadly fray.

* * * * *

"Charge, archers, charge!" the French King cries;
"charge on these English now—

We'll show their haughty chivalry that *we* can fight,
we trow."

"Sire, let the bowmen rest awhile," the Genoese captains say;

"They're sore fatigued, for they have marched full many a league to-day."

"How!" quoth the Count D'Alençon, "do they refuse to fight?

Charge!—for the day is waning fast, full soon it will be night.

Cowards! to stand irresolute!—your King's command obey;

Forward! and chase these English curs off yonder field. Away!"

Unwillingly to battle the Genoese archers go—

For forced and hasty marchings have worn their courage low;

And more their ardour still to quench, the rain-clouds 'gin to flow,

As though the heavens conspired with men to work their overthrow.

For every English man-at-arms the French have four to-day;

But every English soldier there is burning for the fray.

Full well on many a distant field they've won their spurs before;

And brave young Edward leads the host, the Prince whom they adore.

Far to the west, beneath the trees that fringe the green hillside,

With England's nobles gathered round, England's loved King doth ride;

And there he keeps a chosen force of archers in reserve.

His eyes are bent upon the host, and not one man will swerve.

And now the signal trumpet's heard. The conflict rages round;

Right valiantly the foemen fight upon the rain-drench'd ground;

And loud the English battle-cry across the field doth ring,

The cry that oft has rung before—"For England and the King!"

At length the dark clouds disappear; the sun is breaking through,

Full in the Frenchmen's eyesight, and hindering their view.

"See—they are in confusion! Forward! Our foemen reel!"

The Black Prince cries, "The vict'ry's ours!" But Alençon's horsemen wheel—

Wheel and surround the English. But succour is at hand—

The Lord Arundel hastens up with all his gallant band.

The Prince is fighting val'rously: though but a boy in years,

A man in strength and prowess—a man, without man's fears.

The Frenchmen press him closely now. But he deals right and left

The blows from his two-edged sword; and see! he just has cleft

Yon stalwart horseman to the earth, through shield, and helm, and brain,

And never more that fiery steed shall bear his weight again.

The danger still increases. "God! I would this fight were done,

For much I fear me for the fate of good King Edward's son;

Ho! captain! Mount your charger fleet, and hasten to the King!"

Outspake the Earl of Arundel, "And quick! assistance bring."

Away at once the horseman spurs. He nears the hillside, where

King Edward and his archers wait. "What are the news ye bear?

Is my son dead?" the monarch asks. "Or is he vanquished?" "Nay!

For I left him even now, Sire, in the thickest of the fray."

"Then wherefore ride ye in such haste?" "My Liege, I come for aid, For peril doth beset the Prince," the Lord Arundel said.

"Then back to those who sent thee, and let this your answer be : To-day the Prince must not expect to receive help from me.

"The honour of this battle shall be reaped by him alone ;

That I'd not share it with him, Arundel might have known.

The vict'ry shall be all my son's—I leave this field to him."

"But, Sire!—" "No answer! Hie thee hence! I tell thee, 'tis my whim."

The captain slowly turns away, and tears steal down his cheeks

As he remounts his charger, and again the battle seeks.

Once more he is beside the Prince ; he tells the monarch's tale.

"Then hasten back, and say to him, his Edward will not fail."

"Soldiers! Upon the enemy make we a fresh attack.

Down like a flood upon their ranks, and force these Frenchmen back!

The sun is sinking rapidly behind yon gray old towers,

But ere it disappears this eve, the battle shall be ours."

The brave young Prince is answered by a deaf'ning English cheer ;

And hearts beat high, and bright eyes flash, those stirring words to hear.

The tumult for a time is stayed. Meanwhile the ranks re-form,

And silently the armies wait—a calm before a storm.

Again the signal trumpet sounds ; again the armies close.

The English, like a surging sea, charge on their wondering foes ;

Who, with a nameless panic seized, in swift confusion fly,

Like withered leaves before the wind, 'neath an autumnal sky.

The conquerors in fierce pursuit the flying Frenchmen track ;

But night's dull shades are gathering, and the trumpet calls them back.

And hark! like thunder through the air the shouts of vict'ry ring,

And on the evening breezes they are wafted to the King.

* * * * *

Full brightly shine the stars to-night, and yon pale moon o'erhead,

Looks calmly down upon the plain, strewn thickly with the dead.

And thus by Edward the Black Prince, our third King Edward's son,

In the golden August twilight, is the field of Cressy won.

THE DOGS' HOME.

RAB and his friends have a Refuge. We blink our eyes and wag our tails in dumb contentment. But where is it? As Growlers, Boxers, Rovers, Trays, of the true vagrant species, we are interested in the inquiry. Supposing, after a fierce snap at a teasing boy, or a lofty set-down of a sleek and lazy Pussy, we find ourselves separated from our master, where are we to go? Is the Home at Hounds-ditch? It might be, appropriately. Is it at Spit-head? Many of our ancestors "might have been seen" there, before the era that gloriously produced the mechanical Jack as a fitting fore-runner of the mechanical Jenny. Is it at Barking? In our puppyhood there was a riddle connecting that spot with dogs somehow. Is it at Bays-water? At Howl-ey-place? Or Bow (Wow)? Ah, well; it is not so foreign to the main idea to find it placed at Holloway. A few ears may be deafened, a few heads sent splitting, by the (not) tacit permission to make much noise in that loud locality; and, with knowing look, and nose well up for scenting, let us shake our rested limbs and set off for a rapid trot there.

It is a long road we are going—past many intricate turnings, and through a regular labyrinth of streets. Never mind. By foot and foot, and by steady doing, we shall get it done. But what do we see getting amusement out of gutters, and sitting cowed and hungry on squalid doorways? Are they not children? Are they not little heads and hearts that can be led to good or left to evil—little bones and muscle that will dwindle to deformity and fever if light and warmth are wanting, and if food is bad, and even that is sickeningly scanty? Alas! alas! And is it true that we are going to a home for dogs, whilst there is left in London city a little shivering and hopeless child?

Oh! unoccupied and tender ladies, can you suffer little human lostlings to die out for want of love and shelter, whilst you are moved to action and enthusiasm by whining, trembling darlings that, instead of two legs, run interestingly on four?

We are sad and sorrowful. Our indignation rises strongly; but—it quickly passes. We discover no lavish expenditure or absurd daintiness when our journeying is done. We were prepared for doings similar to

those of a German schoolmistress in our knowledge, who sat up two whole nights with her sick "Schul-zimmer Hund," Prinz, bestowing as much, or perhaps rather more, care on him than on her old "Grossmutter," or her three good "Tante." We had had in mind, too, a dogs' hospital that existed years ago at the West-end, where each invalid was put into a cradle at night, with a cap on and a *robe de nuit*. But at last we stand in a flat and insignificant neighbourhood, in a little-heard-of street, and we come upon a poor and ugly yard. In it are arrangements as simply dog-like and anti-human as they can be; and it is the Refuge, and the dogs are quite welcome to it. They are fed and housed, it is true, but their food is soaked kennel-biscuit and ox-head-trimmings; and they are lodged in a row of small, low stables, simply strewn with hay and straw. Some half of them—and there are sixty, perhaps, in all—have been let out into a length of high-walled, shabby, waste-ground for a run; and they cluster at the wire that fences it, and give out a full chorus of snaps and yelps as our strange feet fall. The unlovely spot has huts and kennels enough for all to shelter in if it should turn to rain; and a bit of debased Zoological Gardens is all to which we can compare it. And their little dogships themselves are so disappointingly uninteresting! Condemned criminals are what they amount to; for they are only kept at the Home a certain number of days to see if their owners come to claim them, and then they will be mercifully and quickly killed! A few, indeed, of likely breeds, are allowed to live a little longer, in case people in want of a dog should apply to choose one (as many do); but how can we expect intelligence and happiness from dogs who have had their day, and who have only been brought to this cheap harbourage by Samaritans polite enough to pull a preliminary bell, or, failing that, agile enough to give a strong fling over the official wall and take a good long run far away directly after? Most of the melancholy animals are black and tan curs, that could never have been caressed by any one. They are relieved by a plum-pudding dog or two, and made more unendurable by the companionship of one of the hideous genus "bull;" but a little wretch running loose about the outer yard, shorn of its long white woollen beauty for brimstone to be rubbed upon its skin, is so

extremely ugly, in its clipped and shivering pinkness, it makes us break out into a hearty laugh. Poor little outcast and strayed community! There is no lap-dog among them; no silky spaniel; no mastiff; no good, brave Newfoundland. When animals of such value as these wander, people are glad enough to house them—there is sure to be a reward offered for the discovery of *them*! Not for such was this Home established. It is supported for the very shelved and deserted creatures here collected: the sort that appeal to no one by pretty looks or heroic conduct; the sort that are driven away from every door they run to, as unwanted and disagreeable guests. These poor *abbandonati* prowls about the streets, lie and sleep in corners, turn mad from thirst and hunger, bite at little trotting legs that pass them, and cause distress and pain for which there is only tardy cure; and any such may be taken to the Home and welcomed. Dog-boarders are received there also. Dogs whose masters are obliged temporarily to part with them, because they are going abroad, perhaps, or going on a visit where "Hector" or "Prim" has not been included in the invitation; for these, two and three shillings a week are paid, according to size; and, like other individuals of our acquaintance, these aristocrats look as if they know their position, and are anxious not to be confounded with creatures of a lower class. We do *not* confound them; we are properly impressed with their superiority; and, having dropped a small contribution into the handy money-box of a stuffed poodle that is seated remindedly at the most open stable-door, we have seen and done all that there is to be seen and done, and we may go away.

We resume our canine nature directly the Refuge gates close heavily behind us. Our tails wag again, and we once more blink our eyes; but—we determine henceforth to keep close enough to our master. We know his hand as it rests upon our head; we know his whistle directly it pierces shrilly in our ear. And somehow we have grown to love him, and his heart pulses generously when he sees us sitting at his side; so no home but his for us, if we can only stay at it. And, ruminating upon this, we twirl ourselves round three times (as Sir Walter Scott says we do, though for our part we never noticed it), and we fall peacefully asleep.

THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK III.—CHAPTER IX.

RELATES TO THE AFFAIRS OF REGINALD ERLE.

THE Oratory of St. Philip Neri was situated in a poor, populous, and unfashionable locality near Bartholomew-square. Half-way down a mean street was a court-yard, which you entered by an archway, roofed over by the upper stories of an old-fashioned gabled house. At the top of this court-yard you turned sharply to the right, up a narrow flagged passage, with tall, many-storied houses on either side, so close to one another that you need not raise your voice above its ordinary pitch to carry on a conversation from window to opposite window. At the end of this passage was the entrance of the Oratory of St. Philip.

Towards the end of May, on a close, heavy evening, which made the odours of the court-yard more than usually overpowering in their unsavoury nastiness, Reginald Erle walked up to the door of the chapel, and, pushing it gently open, entered and took his place quietly on a bench near the door. It was some time since he had been inside the edifice which was the scene of Father Francis's ministrations, but the aspect of the place remained unchanged. The dim evening light was made more dim in its passage through the stained windows, rich in saints, and yellow-haired, blue-eyed cherubim. The red light of the lamp that burned, day and night, before the altar, shone with a subdued brightness; a few of the candles disposed about the reredos and the pulpit shed their yellow rays on the face of the preacher, who had just ascended his rostra. His congregation was thin, but devout. Having pronounced the customary formula, the Jesuit commenced his discourse. He gave his hearers a short account of the life and labours of the Saint, on the eve of whose day they were met together. Of his power of miraculous healing, of his self-denying fasts, of his long and pious vigils, of his holiness, his death, the virtue of his relics, which Sovereigns coveted, and Popes preserved. Then he made a short exhortation to his hearers to imitate the life of this godly man—go forth to their homes and do likewise;

closing his sermon with a few sentences of impassioned fervour.

Reginald Erle listened with attention, and with something like a feeling of pleasure, to the simple eloquence of his old tutor. The words of Father Francis rang in his ears still, when, after prayer, and incense, and hymns, the blessing was pronounced from the steps of the flower-bedecked altar, and the vesper service was over. He lingered in his place while the little congregation left the chapel, until in a few minutes the priest joined him; and, linking his arm in Lavelle's, they left the Oratory together.

"I am glad," said Lavelle, when they entered his house, which was close to the chapel—"most heartily glad to see you, Reginald, in attendance on the service of the Church. Would to heaven I could win you to a loving sense of the beauty of holiness exemplified in the practice and teaching of the only true Church. But," he added, taking Erle's hand in an affectionate manner, "I am truly glad, dear son, to see you here to-night."

"To tell you the truth, father," said Erle, with a smile of candour, "I called here expecting to find you in; and when I was told you were not yet returned from the Oratory, I thought I would wait there for you rather than here."

"I welcome you here as there, and there as here," replied the Jesuit. "Now the poor Doctor is away in Paris, you might come oftener to see me. Come to vespers, and drink some tea, and chat with me afterwards."

"To the tea and chat I will say yes freely enough, Father; but you forget my promise to the Good Uncle. And I cannot break my word given to him."

"The danger is not in breaking your promise—it lies in keeping it. My son, it is a fearful thing to be without the pale of the one infallible Church."

"That can only be infallible which believes in its own infallibility."

"And this the true and only Church has ever done. Let me win you over to the cause of Christianity, and all shall yet be well with you. For the Shepherd careth for His own."

"I am a Christian, Father Francis—in profession, at least."

"But not in reality and in truth. Oh, Erle—Reginald, be not deaf to the voice

of wisdom! Have faith in the mediation of the Blessed Mother. Remember the words I taught your childish lips to say long ago. Forego the shoals of treacherous reasoning—the damning error of Rationalism, and all scarcely less hurtful schisms. Let me receive you into the fold—into the bosom of the only true Church. At least, fear not to attend my ministrations. If my poor dear friend had only been less inclined to believe in the misleading fallacies of so-called science, he would have been happy and prosperous now, I doubt not, for one instant. His trials and misfortunes are a judgment on him for his hardened unbelief.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Erle, earnestly, “pray do not say that; think of his kindness of heart, his unceasing charity and goodness.”

“These are nothing in themselves—they are less than nothing. Without the life-current of faith they are but dead straws, to which at the last it shall avail not to cling. Life is only in religion, and religion pure and undefiled is only in the one true Church. May the day be not far to seek when I shall number you, my dear boy, among her faithful children!”

After a pause of a minute, Reginald said, with some emotion, “My dear Father Francis, I cannot permit myself even to seem to assent to what you say. That the calamity which has overtaken my kind friend and benefactor would have happened to him just the same, whatever his religion, I firmly believe. That he always has acted from a certain conviction, and not from any less worthy motive. I know his doubts are sincere.”

“Unquestionably so,” replied the Jesuit, “and therefore the more difficult to be dealt with.”

“For my own part,” said Reginald, “I have thought long and anxiously on matters of religion and of creed. From your Church—the reverend antiquity of whose claims I admit—I was cut off, as you know, by that good man to whom I owe so much.”

“I know it, and I seek now to repair the mischief—to undo what I am sure he did from purely conscientious motives.”

“I am happy to hear you acknowledge the truth of what I say concerning the Doctor,” continued the young man. “His hatred—if I may call it by so harsh a name—to the principles and tenets of your

Church was rather, I think, of a political nature. He distrusted priests.”

“Yet no other body of men is so worthy to be trusted. Consider their lives of holy labour, their energy, their zeal, their disinterested devotion to the cause of their most high Master, their—”

“My own difficulty”—Erle began, but he was interrupted by Father Francis, who placed a hand lovingly on each shoulder, and looking earnestly into his face, said—

“The difficulty, my son, is not in accepting the Christian faith; it is in rejecting it. Cast it aside, and trust to what man vain-gloriously calls his reason, and what have you left? Rudderless and dismasted you must drift amid the shoals and quicksands of infidelity, without course or destination, a hopeless wreck.”

“I have felt this,” said Erle.

“There is but one pilot—the Church. One harbour of refuge—the Cross. There is yet time for me to win back my friend Achille from his unhappy errors. I regard something which occurred but the other day as an omen. Tempered and chastened by adversity, I shall yet restore him to that fold he left, and the Church will gladly receive him into her bosom.”

“I have often thought,” said Erle, “of a passage the good Doctor was fond of quoting when you talked to him as you are now talking to me. He used to say, ‘If you ask me what is my religion, I reply, it is the religion of all wise men. But what that is, no wise man ever yet told another.’”

“I remember it well,” replied Lavelle. “He has said it to me a score of times.”

“And I,” said Erle, “am of the Doctor’s opinion. I believe in good works—in charity of thought, word, and deed—in the sweet odour of a blameless life; and I am inclined to mistrust all systems, and creeds, and dogmas. A man’s religion is an affair only between himself and his Creator.”

“But Dr. Gasc would—speaking geologically—deny that he had any Creator, and set up rocks and fossils against the inspired and infallible history of the world, with a hardened infidelity that appalled me. Oh, Achille!” cried his old friend, “often have I prayed that you might be brought to the light of truth. And now I feel you shall yet die in the old faith—the faith of your fathers.”

This serious conversation was interrupted



Once a Week.]

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

[May 21, 1870.

by the entrance of a servant with the teatray.

"Come," said Lavelle, turning to Reginald, "let us dismiss our argument for the present, and sit down to our tea."

There was no disposition on either side to renew the discussion after their simple meal was concluded.

"I have not very lately heard from the Doctor," said Lavelle; "but I have money of his in my hands; and, in a recent letter, he told me to supply you with funds when you required them."

"I have no immediate need for money," Reginald replied. "I am under infinite obligations to Dr. Gasc, and I have to thank you for many kindnesses rendered to me. It is my most ardent desire at this moment to be able to relieve the Doctor of the necessity of contributing money for my support. I long to be independent. Surely I can do something to earn money, even while I read for my profession."

"The ambition to be independent is no ignoble one," said Lavelle; "and it is far from my purpose to repress it. Had Dr. Gasc, our good friend, continued in his former prosperous circumstances, all would have been well, and no reasonable desire of yours would have remained ungratified."

"Indeed, it was always so. And the remembrance of the kindness of the dear Doctor only makes me the more solicitous to add my share to the common purse."

"For your years of study you need not fear," said Lavelle, in a manner calculated to inspire not only confidence but hope; "for the rest, you will succeed in your profession. Of that I have no doubt."

"Perhaps I should have done better if I had stuck to physic, but my dislike was so very strong, I think I was almost, if not quite, justified in throwing it up."

"Most certainly you were right," said Lavelle; "for a man voluntarily to tie himself for life to a pursuit he can take no interest or pleasure in is the act of a madman. It is to be lamented that you were compelled to quit your college without a degree. However, you can yet repair that omission, if you choose to do so."

"I do not think I ever shall—at least, if my present state of feeling continues," replied Erle.

"Well, my dear boy," said Lavelle, "go on as you are now. Work—study; and let not anxiety for the future take posses-

sion of your mind. Dr. Gasc can still afford to provide for your wants during that term you must spend in acquiring technical knowledge. If he could not, your old tutor and friend is not without money."

"Oh! thank you, Father Francis," cried Erle. "I never doubted your kindness; but I must get money for myself. I feel like a caged bird—I pant for freedom and independence."

"And the hand of Father Francis would be the first to open for you the door of your cage, and free you from your imprisonment. Your aspiration is noble, and worthy of you, my son."

"I have," said Erle, "as yet taken no step further than to make myself acquainted day by day with the 'Persons Wanted' column of the *Times* newspaper. Possibly, if I were to insert an advertisement offering myself in the capacity of secretary to a nobleman or member of Parliament, I might obtain such a post. I am qualified to take it, I think."

"Pooh! pooh!" said Lavelle. "Don't think of it for one moment. People who want private secretaries don't advertise in the daily papers for them. Save yourself the valuable time consumed in looking over the columns of the *Times*. If you do see an advertisement that seems genuine, it will, on inquiry, turn out that two or three hundred pounds of cash security is a *sine qua non*—"

"Which I don't happen to possess."

"A *sine qua non* in the affair. What such people—schemers and knaves every one—really want is the cash security, of which and themselves they soon dispose, to spin another web for enmeshing flies."

"I have no influence to procure me such an appointment as I want, I fear."

"You have," said the Jesuit, briskly; "you forget Father Francis. I can apply to friends, high in the ranks of the secular clergy, who will be likely to help us. Men who have power and influence, and will not fail to use them for Francis Lavelle. I have done them services often. They will remember. A Jesuit never forgets the claims of his order."

"As you speak of it in such a hopeful way, my dear Father Francis, and as a matter so easily accomplished, I wish I had come to you before."

"Be assured," said Lavelle, "I will do all that lies in my power. There is but one

thing that may prove an obstacle in our path."

"Tell me what it is; and if it lies in my power I will speedily remove it. What is it?" And he looked at Father Francis, awaiting his answer.

"Your faith, my son."

Erle's countenance fell. "Still bent upon converting me," he thought.

"My influence," continued Lavelle, "is with those of the Roman communion. But yet I hope, through them, to hear of something heretic, and suited to you." And he smiled at the change that came over Erle's face.

They had finished their tea and toast, and the sober domestic had removed the tea-tray. Erle intimated his intention of proceeding homewards.

"Can nothing be done in Paris by the Doctor towards clearing up that awful mystery that hangs about me?" he asked, nervously and hesitatingly, of the Jesuit.

"I do not know, my son," answered Lavelle.

The politic priest well knew the advantage to be gained from pleading stark ignorance when it is undesirable to enter upon a matter.

"You know no more than I know?"

"No more."

"Yet you have known me from my infancy. You were an inmate of the dear old house in Bartholomew-square when the good Doctor took me from Mrs. Grafton's, where I was born?"

"I was never in Achille's confidence," replied the Jesuit.

"I have questioned Mrs. Grafton, you may be sure," Erle continued.

Father Francis bowed his head in assent.

"All I can learn from her is something of a dark man who called to see my mother on the night when I was born. Who was that dark man? Was he my father?"

"I do not know, my son," answered Lavelle. "You must ask the Doctor for information. I cannot give you any."

As Reginald Erle walked back, in the close air of the summer night, to his lodgings in Upper Gore-street, his mind reverted again and again to that subject on which he had so often pondered. "Who was the dark man? Where is he? Why was he interested in me?"—were the questions he asked himself. And they were questions he could not answer.

CHAPTER X.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

SIR HAROLD and Miss Margaret, accompanied by Mabel, had come from Madingley, on the appointed day, to pay their visit of five weeks, or longer if they chose to stay, in Grosvenor-square. And Mrs. Robert had contrived to be ready for them, and to receive them with a very good grace.

One evening, some time after their arrival, Robert Mortimer and his wife lingered by the drawing-room fire after their guests had retired.

As was his custom, Mortimer had brought a book with him from his study; and he sat, with his feet on the fender, turning over page after page as he hurried through it, determined to finish the volume he had in his hand before he left the room for his chamber. It was the third volume of a new novel, bright in covers of green and gold, and fresh from a circulating library, upon which his attention was concentrated for the time; for even amid the magnificent labours of the Pink Tape Office, and the necessary attendance upon his duties in Parliament, Robert Mortimer found leisure to keep himself posted up in the current literature of the day.

"After a debate," he said, "an hour or two spent in the perusal of a Roman poet or a modern author calmed his mind, and he slept the better for it; so that the time was hardly wasted."

His wife sat on the opposite side of the hearth-rug, warming her feet at the bright fire; for though it was May the night was very chilly, and a fire was a necessity rather than a luxury. Presently she rose, and said—

"I think I must leave you, Robert, if you are going to sit any longer."

"I am ready," he replied, closing his book. "But, stay; there is something I will mention now it occurs to me."

"What is it, Robert?" asked his wife.

"Was Charles here yesterday?"

"Yes; he came before luncheon, and stayed with us till we went out."

"And where was he going to dine?"

"With Malton, he said—at his club."

"I asked Brady," said her husband, "and he told me he did not think Charles had been here all day."

"Oh, yes, Robert; he was here all the morning."

"With Mabel?"

"With us all."

"Why could he not dine here, instead of going drinking and gambling with that reprobate?"

"Robert!" exclaimed his wife, in astonishment.

"I mean precisely what I say, Florence. I know the life they lead—you don't."

"You have always something to say against the poor boy," replied Mrs. Mortimer, preparing her handkerchief for a display of her abundant tears.

"I only wish to warn you in time. You have more influence over Charles than I have. In one word, he's playing the fool—behaving towards Mabel as if he might trifle with her as he pleased. I am sure, at dinner the day before yesterday, he was hardly polite—running off, on a pretence of duty or something of the kind, the instant he had swallowed his dinner. He ought to have stayed with us for half an hour, and then gone with Margaret and Mabel to the Cholmondeleys."

"I think his conduct towards Mabel is all we can desire," said Mrs. Mortimer. "Of course, he has his companions and his amusements, Robert; and we cannot expect that he will be always in attendance upon us. Besides, you know, he never did care much about dancing."

"In fact, he is behaving to Mabel as if he had already secured her hand, is he not?"

"I do not see any reason for finding fault, Robert."

"I may infer from that, I suppose, that you think I am finding fault without cause. I beg your pardon. Don't you be silly enough to imagine that because Miss Despencer knows it was her father's wish that she should marry Charles, that she is proof against the attractions of every man who may chance to meet her. A girl like Mabel has plenty of admirers, I can tell you. But I will take care no more mischief is done; for Brady has my instructions to discover exactly how and where your son spends his evenings. And I will open his eyes to his folly myself."

After this intimation of his intention, Mr. Mortimer thought proper to retire.

"Here is Charlie!" said his mother, when he rode up to the door of his father's house in Grosvenor-square next day, at about one

o'clock. "He will be with us in a minute, and then you can ask him his opinion of 'Marian.' I think he has read it."

"Marian" was the novel Charlie's father had been reading the night before.

"It is a book," said Mr. Campbell, who was staying a few days in London, and had made an early call in Grosvenor-square, "which I have heard most favourably spoken of."

"It is a very pretty story, I think," said Mabel.

"I have not read it," Mrs. Mortimer remarked. "Robert finished it last night. By the bye, Mabel, if we go out this afternoon, when we are in St. James's-square we may as well leave the books we have read, and have some fresh ones."

"It is a story of pure love," said Mr. Campbell, turning over the leaves. "Not a chapter is unnecessary or redundant; all heighten the effect, develop the plot, and promote the catastrophe with which it ends. 'Marian' is a great book."

"Do you know anything of the author, Mr. Campbell?"

"I have met him," replied the scholar; "but not lately. I recollect he dined with us once at Tudor some years ago, and was most mightily amusing in the Common-room afterwards."

"That was a long time ago, I suppose?"

"Yes; long before he took to politics, and became a star in the diplomatic world."

"Do you not think, Mr. Campbell," asked Mabel Despencer, "that 'Marian' teaches us a good deal? How people should make love, for instance?"

"There I grant you are right," replied Mr. Campbell. "As for teaching us much—why, that it doesn't; for all there is in it we knew before. The author could not teach us what he did not know himself. That is against reason. But he certainly has made his heroes and heroines bill and coo at a fine rate."

"Mabel is naturally, at her age, more interested in such topics," said Miss Margaret, "than you are, Mr. Campbell."

"Why, yes," returned Campbell, "she is, no doubt. But although I am but a dry old stick of a bachelor parson, without so much as a wife to recommend me, still, you know, Miss Margaret, I am interested in a good story, and in a love story as much as another."

"More, you ought to be, Mr. Campbell," said Mabel, playfully, "since I say I am. But you have not answered my question."

"Have I not?" said Campbell, laughing, and making a droll grimace or two after his peculiar manner. "I thought I had, Miss Mabel, to my own satisfaction and to yours."

"You addressed your reply to my question to Aunt Margaret, which was rude for one so polite at all times as my old friend Mr. Campbell," Mabel said, taking a seat by his side. "Now, tell me—do you not think the book tells us how to make love?"

Mrs. Robert looked persistently at a water-cart which was going its slow course round the Square. She thought Mabel's question pointed possibly at her son.

"Well, now, Miss Despencer," said Campbell, turning in his chair so as to face his fair questioner, "I do not know that any man less, say, than Shakspeare or Goethe can teach us to make love. A man makes love to a woman after his own fashion, as nature has taught him; and that, after all, is best. I should make but a sorry Euphuist. I think the simplest eloquence the most effective. Truth goes straight to the heart."

"You will not agree with me, then, Mr. Campbell?"

"My dear Miss Despencer, upon such a subject heaven forbid that I should differ in opinion from you!"

"See! here is Charlie," said Miss Margaret; "perhaps he can add something to our conversation."

"He has not read the book, aunt," said Mabel; "his time is so much occupied with his important duties. Besides, I dare say soldiers never read. It must be effeminate in a warrior to pore over books. Let them be left to parsons and women. I don't believe the Black Prince could write his own name. I don't know, though, that I believe in the Black Prince himself."

"You used not to be such a sceptic concerning matters of history, Miss Despencer," said Mr. Campbell.

"Used I not, Mr. Campbell?" returned Mabel, blushing slightly, and stamping the carpet ever so delicately with her shapely foot. "I declare I hardly know what I do believe now. Everything is so horribly provoking."

Mr. Charles had rather expected a sum-

mons from his father, and was agreeably surprised when he found himself with the ladies, and that his presence was not required in the study of the Under-Secretary of the Pink Tape Office. On entering the room he was received, as usual, by Miss Margaret and his mother; but Mr. Campbell, his old tutor, gave him but a cold greeting; and Mabel was out of humour with him, with herself, and with all the rest of the world.

Indeed, since the affair with Erle at Tudor, Campbell had lost all faith in his former pupil, and was prepared to hear of any enormity of misconduct without surprise—if not altogether without regret. However, in the presence of Miss Margaret and his mother, Campbell could not well help being civil to him.

"How have you left my old pupil?" said he, addressing Charles, and speaking of Malton.

"Oh! he's all right, thank you. At least he was last night, when I left him."

The presence of Mabel Despencer had been enough to frighten Malton away from Robert's house, for a time at least, until he should have forgotten her refusal to accept his offer. But, unromantic as he was, this young man had more than once been looked upon suspiciously by the policeman who patrols Grosvenor-square at night, as, wrapped up in his long cloak, he stood opposite Robert Mortimer's house and gazed fixedly thereon. And only that he might think of Mabel. That he might be near Mabel. For having once well fallen in love with her, he found he was not nearly so much in love with himself. Life had lost its zest. His chambers in the Albany saw him but little; his club knew not his presence; his friends missed him from his old and favourite haunts. He was as difficult to be caught for a dinner or a supper as a cabinet minister in the height of the session.

"I'll tell you what," was the remark of Mr. Jack Childers, at a card party, select and quiet, at their club, one night about this time, to which Malton did not come, "it's my opinion, Malton has got—what you may call—softening of the brain."

"Softening of the bwain!" ejaculated Fitzboodle, in alarm, when he heard the words of Childers. "Softening of the bwain! I wonder if it's at all infectious? Dashed if I play at the same table with Malton again in a hurwy if it is."

Thus were his friends commenting upon Malton's absence from their meetings of play and pleasure. While those remarks were being made at the Rawley Club in St. James's-street, the subject of them had strolled, in his varnished boots and evening dress—hardly disguised by his light overcoat—to smoke his cigar under the shade of the lamp-posts in Grosvenor-square.

"By Jove!" had been his exclamation, as he flung away the end of his cigar, and hailed a passing Hansom. "I shall never love any woman but Mabel. She's worth all the lot put together. I'll have another flutter for her yet."

"Marian: a Tale of Love," was not returned to the library in St. James's-square that day. Unsoldierlike as it might appear, Charles Mortimer asked Mabel to let him read it. She graciously consented, and Miss Margaret expressed a hope that he would profit by the lessons in love-making therein contained.

After the elder ladies had left the room, and Mr. Campbell had gone out with Sir Harold, Charles and Mabel were left alone. They so far improved the occasion as to have a long and uninterrupted talk of above an hour's duration, at the end of which they were summoned to luncheon. After that pleasant meal had been disposed of, Charles accompanied the ladies in their drive; and Mabel, who had recovered her good temper and spirits, believed in the Black Prince, and other historical and non-historical personages again. Among whom might be included Mr. Charles Mortimer, of her Majesty's Nth Lancers. They visited the Academy in Trafalgar-square, and spent some time in admiring and criticising the pictures there; and then proceeded to the Park, where they saw many of their acquaintance, who were unanimous in thinking Charles a very lucky fellow. After the drive, came dinner; when Charles sat next Mabel, and displayed great gallantry and devotion by very speedily following the ladies to the drawing-room, instead of staying to drink claret with Sir Harold, Mr. Campbell, and his father. Here he spent a couple of hours; and, when he left in his father's brougham for his quarters at Bloombridge, the ladies were supremely pleased with him. Miss Margaret was half-doing on a sofa; Mabel was in high good-humour; and Mrs. Robert was so

delighted at the account she could give his father on his return from the House, that she forgot, for the time, even her nerves and maladies. But the carriage had not proceeded farther in the direction of Bloombridge than the street which leads westward from Grosvenor-square, when the check-string was abruptly pulled, and the coachman, turning his horses' heads, drove due east.

In a quarter of an hour he pulled up in front of the Variety Theatre. The burlesque was just over, and the people were pouring out.

"Drive round to the stage-door, and wait there," said Charles to the coachman, as he disappeared down the passage that leads into the house.

The coachman did as he was instructed. He had just despatched one of those officious and active young men who hang about the doors of theatres towards the close of the performances, with an eye to stray coppers, for a pint of stout in a pewter, when a tall gentleman in a white tie, and clerical gray overcoat, opened the door of the carriage and took his place in the corner farthest from the light of the lamps, opposite the stage-door. When the obliging young man emerged from the neighbouring public-house with the stout, the coachman hardly relished his draught as much as he expected. He gave the pewter to the young man to finish.

"You know, Mrs. Grafton, you promised me the pleasure of seeing you and Miss Howard home to-night," said Charles Mortimer, coming out presently with that respectable old lady on his arm; while Miss Howard followed, cloaked and hooded, close behind. The coachman gave a long series of convulsive winks, and cleared his throat in a very noisy manner; but Charles was too much occupied to observe him.

As he gallantly opened the door for Mrs. Grafton to enter the brougham, she exclaimed, springing back on to the pavement—

"Good gracious, Mr. Mortimer! there's somebody inside!"

"What!" cried Charles, in astonishment.

He looked in, and met his father's eye!

In that brougham there was only room for three.

"A—a four-wheeler!" he had the presence of mind to say.

"Now, then—first four-wheeler," called the policeman. "Here y'are, sir."

He saw Mrs. Grafton and Bertie safely in.

"I am afraid I can't accompany you. I'm awfully sorry and disappointed, I assure you. Another time. Good night."

"You can't deceive me, Charles," Robert Mortimer said, as his scapegrace son coolly took his seat beside him.

TABLE TALK.

IN ILLUSTRATION of the high prices which have been given for rare editions of the Bible (see "Table Talk" for April 23), a correspondent informs us that at a recent sale in New York, Eliot's Indian Bible, of which there are but few copies in existence, was purchased for 1,050 dollars. One was sold at the Corwin sale for 825 dollars; and the copy just sold was purchased in 1868 at the Bruce sale for 1,130 dollars. There is a copy in the British Museum; but, as it is said that there are only two men in the world who can read it, it is probably not often consulted. Another book at the same sale, which brought 120 dollars, was, we presume, an Indian commentary on the Bible by Eliot. As a literary curiosity, we give its title:—"Mamosse Wunneetupana-tamwe up-Biblum God Naneeswe Mekkone Testament kah wonk Wusku Testament, ne quoshkennumuk nashpe Wuttmcumoh Christ noh asooweesit John Eliot." At the same sale a tract with a very long title-page, commencing, "The Bloudy Tenent washed and made white in the Bloude of the Lambe," written by "John Cotton, Batchelor of Divinity," and printed "at the Crowne in Pope's Head Alley, 1647," brought 62 dollars 50 cents; while a splendid copy of "Dibdin's Tour" was purchased by a New York lady for no less than 1,960 dollars, or not much less than £420. The lady's name is not published, probably lest bibliophiles should bid for her.

FROM AN ARTICLE entitled "The Humours of the Book Trade," in a late number of the *Chicago Evening Post*—a journal probably not much read by our readers generally—we cull the following pithy anecdotes:—Country customers often include other articles besides books in their orders, and the Chicago houses send out and purchase them. Shortly after the popular work entitled "Smoked Glasses" appeared, and before it was generally known, an order arrived for a number of popular works, and

contained the item, "1 'Smoked Glasses.'" The clerk who attended to the order, bought and shipped to the customer a pair of coloured spectacles, instead of the desired book. Another order included "Six 'Primitive Christianity.'" It was sent back with the reply, "No 'Primitive Christianity' to be found in Chicago."—A slow boy, who had lately been taken into a house in which his father had long been clerk, was one day asked by another clerk, who wished to speak with the father:—"Bill, where is your paternal ancestor?" To which the bewildered lad replied, "I'm sure I don't know; I never know where half the books are." A very quick boy in another house, who had been specially taught always to sell a visitor something, whether it is what he asks for or not, was accosted by a dignified old gentleman, in gold spectacles, with the question, "Have you 'Feuchtwanger's Gems?'" Never having heard of the book required, the boy, resolved if possible to do a stroke of business, replied, "It is not just now in stock, sir; but here is a book that may answer your purpose"—at the same time handing to the disgusted philosopher, "Precious Gems of the Heavenly Foundations."

A CORRESPONDENT: *Apocrypha* of your recent article on plagiarisms, perhaps all your readers have not noticed this Shakspearean repetition:—

HENRY VI. Part I.—Act V., Scene 3.

Suffolk. She's beautiful; and therefore to be woo'd;

She is a woman; therefore to be won.

TITUS ANDRONICUS.—Act II., Scene 1.

Demetrius. Why mak'st thou it so strange?

She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd;
She is a woman, therefore may be won.

AN INGENIOUS AMERICAN has discovered a new use to which old paper may be applied—namely, to the construction of coffins. The paper is reduced to a pulp, rolled out to the requisite thickness, saturated with oil, baked, japanned, and polished. It thus becomes hard, and capable of resisting all ordinary destructive agencies, and is thought to be imperishable. Another American has made a discovery which promises to be of more importance—namely, that pulp for paper may be prepared from wood. Trees, after being denuded of their bark, are cut up into blocks an inch long and broad, and half an inch thick. They

are then steamed and crushed into pulp, care being taken that they shall be so arranged that the fibre may be preserved.

A CORRESPONDENT sends an anecdote of the late Archbishop Whately, which he had from an eye and ear witness, and which he believes has not been published:—If the writer of the article, "Is Ireland Irreconcilable?" in the April number of the "Dublin Review," had opportunities of acquainting himself with the feelings and opinions of the great bulk of the people, he might learn that the commonalty are hopelessly irreconcilable to English rule; as much from the memories of the bitter past of English misrule here, as from any sense of undressed grievances. Will this straw I now throw up show how the wind blows? My informant was, one summer's day many years ago, at Howth, enjoying the health-giving sea breeze and the varied beauties of the magnificent landscape—a landscape which, in all the constituents of picturesqueness, is almost unrivalled in Ireland. He had paused so often, when descending the hill, as every new beauty of the scene opened on his view, that he was late for the train he wanted to return to Dublin by. Two other gentlemen were also late for that train, and walked back from the terminus to the harbour close by. One of the gentlemen was Archbishop Whately, and his companion was a clergyman. There is a row of granite posts along the quay, from the tops of which an iron chain is suspended to prevent people tumbling into the dock at night. The Archbishop seated himself on a chain about midway between two posts, and presently began, through pre-occupation of mind—or, like Dryden's ploughman, "for want of thought"—to swing backwards and forwards, at first gently, but, his weight giving impetus to the motion, soon quickened it to a rapid movement. Two beggar-women, Biddy and Judy, were proceeding down the quay, pursuing their occupation, when, seeing the clergymen, they approached them to ply their trade. Biddy informed Judy, in an aside, that the old gentleman was the Archbishop. Judy thereupon assumed the inimitable expression of feature which Irish beggars, in the good old times of the stage-coaches, carried to a degree of perfection which few of the stage mimics have ever attained; it was part of their professional art, expressive as their elo-

quence, and adaptable alike to blarney or vituperation—to satire, humour, invective, or persuasion. And their eloquence was something to admire. Demosthenes could never have rivalled them in their peculiar style of *ore rotundo*. "God love him!" said Judy, "there he is on his swing-swang, as innocent as a child at play—the goodness of his heart is beaming on his face." "Be dhe huist, alanna!" said Biddy; "sure it's the Sassanagh Ard-Easbog that's in it."* "Musha! bad cess to him," rejoined the now irate Judy; "the ugly skannin' ould desaiver—sittin' there like the devil, purtendin' innocence to deludher people. Fitter for him to be at home countin' his tides (tithes), than to be swing-swangin' hisself, like a lump of a foolish girsha (girl), mitching from school. Bad scran to him an' his seed, breed, and generation—the thievin' ould tithe proctor." As a policeman was seen approaching, the politic Biddy moved her wrathful friend off the scene. Evidently Judy, if acquainted with Irish history, would say, with Hugh O'Neill, the great Earl of Tirowen—"I hate the Sassanagh churl as if he came but yesterday." So "irreconcilable" are the great bulk of the people here to British supremacy in Ireland, that Judy could see nothing but deceit, and all manner of perfidious wickedness, in the simple act which had excited her admiration and applause when she imagined it was done by a bishop of her own creed and race. Judy, who is not alone in her deep-seated prejudices, would, doubtless, have looked on complacently while the Celtic Catholic Archbishop was engaged in stealing a horse, while she would have sounded an alarm if the Sassanagh prelate had only looked over the hedge.

THE OPENING WORDS of Mr. Anthony Trollope's novel, "The Bertrams," are as follows:—"This is undoubtedly the age of humanity—as far, at least, as England is concerned. A man who beats his wife is shocking to us; and a colonel who cannot manage his soldiers without having them beaten is nearly equally so. We are not very fond of hanging; and some of us go so far as to recoil, under any circumstances, from taking the blood of life. We perform our operations under chloroform; and it

* "Be silent, my lamb! sure it is the English Protestant Archbishop."

has even been suggested that those schoolmasters who insist on adhering in some sort to the doctrines of Solomon should perform their operations in the same guarded manner. If the disgrace be absolutely necessary, let it be inflicted; but not the bodily pain." This passage may afford a hint to those who have been so vigorously using their pens in discussing what some of our contemporaries call "The Whipping Question;" and who have been inditing epistles in favour of, or against, the flogging of boys and girls—which letters, on the *pro* side of the subject, might have been aptly dated from "Whipping 'em." According to the author of the "Ingoldsby Legends," the wicked uncle of the "Babes in the Wood" thus declared his feigned purpose with regard to his niece:—

"And Jane, as when girls have the dumps
Fortune-hunters in scores to entrap 'em rise,
Shall go to those worthy old frumps,
The two Misses Tickler, of Clapham-rise."

Could not the modern Misses Tickler have an operating-room, like our fashionable dentists, where chloroform, laughing-gas, and other anæsthetics could be administered to the sufferer during the application of the birch-rod?—for, as a matter of course, these advocates of corporal punishment accept the literalness of the translation in Proverbs xiii., 24—xxiii. 13, 14, and look upon "the rod" only in the shape of the genuine old-fashioned birch, which is so intimately connected with the memory of the scholastic Dr. Busby, who, doubtless, would quote as a sufficient precedent that Milton himself had been horsed on the Cambridge flogging-block. But such schoolmasters, who delighted in castigation, were appropriately consigned, in Hood's poem, to the tantalizing tortures of the bottomless pit.

THANKS TO THE DISCOVERIES of Dr. Angus Smith and Professor Tyndall, the germs of disease can now be detected and defined more readily than heretofore; and, consequently, can proportionably be guarded against, dealt with, and subdued. It would be interesting if, in the prosecution of these investigations, any new facts could be established regarding the colour of pestilential vapours. At the last outbreak of the cholera, a *blue* mist was observed in Greenwich Park, and afterwards in Hyde Park, to which appearance much importance was at the time attached. It was with a mist from the

Yellow Sea, according to Huc, and under a lurid sky, that the cholera was borne into China on a death-laden wind. In Argyllshire some curious mounds were pointed out to me; and I was told that if they were dug into they would be found to be ruined cottages, containing the skeletons of former inmates. And the explanation was given to me, that when the great plague swept across the country to the Western Highlands, after raging in London, many households were smitten by it; and, as there were none to tend them while sick, or to bury them when dead, whole families died where they lay, and their plague-stricken houses were avoided; until at length the roof and the heather-thatch fell in upon them, and then a knoll was formed, and the turf grew over it, and thus covered in the place of sepulture. The people spoke of this as though it had only occurred a short time since, instead of two hundred years ago; and they all agreed in saying that the plague was carried to them in a great *white* cloud. The question how far malignant diseases can give a colouring to pestilential exhalations and malarious vapours is well worth inquiring into. In the eastern counties of England, a peculiar thick, dull, gray haze occasionally sweeps over the country from the East; this is locally termed "tide-weather," and is supposed by the agricultural labourers to bring with it the blight.

AN UNPUBLISHED EPIGRAM has been handed to us on the Stowe-Byron controversy, which, as would appear by recent accounts from America, is not yet at an end:—

THE EPITHET B.-STOWE'D ON BYRON.

Of names for our great men we keep an assorial;
Byron's worshippers call him the "Poet Immortal!"
His detractors demur—"With that name we must
quarrel;
You're not right to a *t*—he's the "Poet immortal."

MR. J. M. BELLEW'S READINGS. — *We have much pleasure in announcing that we have completed an arrangement for the immediate appearance in ONCE A WEEK of some of the most popular Readings of this eminent Elocutionist.*

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The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

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CHAPTER XVIII.



SWEE-
H A V E
S E E N,
about a
year had
gone by,
and a
day had
b e e n
fixed for
father
and son
to set
off on
their ex-
pedition
to the
Duke's
Castle.
Now, in-
d e e d,

Charles felt that the crisis was about to begin for him. What could he do? He felt that resistance was hopeless; and so he became quite passive, and made no attempt at opposition.

It was about a fortnight from the time when they were to depart, when his father one morning sent up for him. Charles always dreaded these formal and official invitations, as they were only sent in that form when there was a communication of some serious character to be made.

When he entered he found Mr. Benbow defended, as it were, behind an embrasure—looking out through high port-holes of papers, and books, and inkstands. His father's face had a very grave and serious air,

tinged with sadness, dashed by importance; though those better acquainted with that impenetrable countenance might have detected, also, a lurking expression of contentment.

"My dear boy," he said, kindly and tenderly, "you must prepare yourself for a trial. I can feel for you—indeed I can; and it is hard, where I know you have centred your affections. But we must all submit to these things."

The young man's face had turned very pale.

"What have you to tell me, father?" he asked.

The answer was the putting an American newspaper into his hand, Mr. Benbow pointing to a particular paragraph.

Charles had an instinct of what was coming, and read the following:—

"Mr. Edge Baycombe, the go-ahead manager of the best Thespian temple in Cincinnati, has lately found out the truth of the proverb about the lip and the slip. He had engaged the European actress who had been setting things ablaze down East, and she was to prove a 'buster,' and help him to chaw up a dangerous opposition. But it is now discovered that the unhappy histrionic was among the victims in the late river steamer accident, and her remains were identified among those saved after the blowing-up of the ill-fated President Jeaffreson."

"That accounts for it, Charles," said his father, after a silence. "I was so wondering all this time that we never heard of her. Poor ill-fated girl! What a wretched end! Somehow, there is always to be something dramatic associated with the lives of these poor creatures!"

The young man said not a word. He remained gazing at the fatal paragraph: then folded it up, and retired with it to his room.

All that morning he shut himself up, and kept looking at it fixedly. The iron of self-reproach had entered into his soul. *His wife* gone!—dead! She *was* his wife; and, of late, what had he been? He dared not conceal it from himself: after all his protestations, all his love, his sworn devotion—it had pressed on him like a nightmare—he had turned his eyes away from the lovely, fascinating Pauline—that angel of delight—whom he had sought, whom he had pursued, whom he had forced into this connection. He could not conceal from himself that he had thought all along that this had been a fatal step—that he had regretted it, and shrunk from it after it was done. He blushed for himself. The old tenderness all came back, and he gave way to a prolonged and bitter grief. No matter; now he should do everything to cherish her memory. He should keep *that* alive as long as he lived.

Several days went by, and he remained sunk in depression, mooning about. His father was very kind and indulgent to him, taking no notice. Another week went by. His son came, and said to him,

“Father, you know I loved her more than anyone in the wide world. I am wretched—full of despair—and I must find some comfort.”

“How, Charles!” said his father, uneasily.

“Let me at least show my love and devotion—now that it is too late to do anything else—by setting up some memorial or tombstone—”

“By all means, Charles. It is a very nice and proper thought, and I honour you for it. I shall write to town this very day.”

“That is not what I mean,” the son said, eagerly. “I mean—to go out there and see—”

“Go out there and see!” his father said, starting up. “Are you mad? Go out to America!”

“I owe it to her memory,” said the young man, fervently. “It is a sacred duty.”

The father lost all patience. “This is more of your folly. You are incurable, and determined to make yourself ridiculous. You will end in ruining us, or are turning idiotic.”

“I did behave like an idiot,” said the young man, fiercely, “to that angel! I deserted her. I ought to have gone with her—

never to have separated from her—to have gone with her all the world over. It was my duty.”

“Your duty!” repeated his father, aghast. But, after a moment’s pause, his old prudence came back to him. His face cleared, and a soothing expression took the place of the other.

“Well, my dear boy, if it must be done, it must. I’ll turn it over.”

Mr. Benbow came later to his son. “It has not been my way,” he said, gravely, “to oppose you in your plans. I think you will do me the justice to say that, of late, I have let you take your own course pretty freely, and without obstruction. Something, I think, is owing to me—I mean to my convenience—the poor bread-winner of the family. Don’t you think so, Charles?”

“You have been most kind and indulgent, sir,” the young man said, eagerly. “I have not a word to say against that. But in this matter it becomes a sacred duty—”

“Well, I agree with you,” said his father. “If you *are* so attached to her—*were*, I mean—if it was *such* a serious passion, I cannot blame you. Indeed, it is only what could be required from a man of honour. But I say you should consult my *convenience*—that is all I ask. You *shall* go to America. But you can wait for three weeks or a month?”

“Certainly, father. You are too good and generous. If you *knew* how I loved—if you knew *how* my whole soul was bound up in her—”

“That is *what I do* know. I see now you were seriously attached to her. But you must not give way—you must show yourself a man. Of course I own that I could not have approved of your marriage with an actress.”

“A lady, father—a born lady. I could prove it.”

“O, of course—I don’t doubt it. And certainly she showed she was a lady by the way in which she behaved. And I should never have forced your inclinations—never! If you had made up your mind to the matter, it would have been idle to have opposed you. But you should have gratified me in some other way, should you not?”

“Anything, dear father. It comforts me to hear you speak in this way. And O, I see I may confide in you! I tell you, I do not believe that she is dead, after all.”

The father started. "Not dead! What do you mean?"

"I have a presentiment—a certain instinct—that tells me she is alive."

"Folly! Why should it be in the papers? However, go if you like. But, I insist there shall be some delay, and that you fall in with my arrangements first."

"And what are they, father? I shall do anything that does not interfere with that sacred duty."

"You must come with me for a couple of days to the Duke's. You owe the family some *amende*, as you have treated them in a very cavalier fashion."

"With all my heart," said the son. "I have no objection *now* to that place."

The father went to his room much disturbed. "What does the fellow mean?—he is incurable. Never mind, though—once in that house, he shall not leave it free! Then he may go to America if he likes."

Within a week came the invitation, and father and son started for Banff Castle.

CHAPTER XIX.

IT was a different scene from the last festival of state. Its gaudy splendour and regal magnificence had given place to a calm sombreness, not the less oppressive. The Duke was in deep black; bearing his sorrows manfully, but forced to commune with the world. His daughter, *distracte* and more indifferent, had acquired, through that heavy shock, a gentle, subdued manner, which really made her interesting. Sadness, or recent sadness, always brings with it, or leaves behind, a species of beauty—or, at least, arouses a sort of interest. And the young man, seeing her utter indifference to him and to all the world, and to all matrimonial plans, saw her under infinitely greater advantage. They both had endured the bitterness of sorrow. She had lost a mother: he had lost a wife. Both had been bereaved. He longed to interchange the story of their griefs; and he could see and feel that she knew the outline of his grief, and felt the interest in it that all women do in such things. There was nobody there but the host, his family, and the two guests. It was infinitely flattering, therefore.

It was very pleasant, too. Very soon, as she walked about the garden, the young Lady Rosa approached the subject on which

he longed to talk, and approached it with a kindly sympathy.

"That night at the little theatre," she said—"that poor actress—I spoke unkindly of her. But it is hard that she should have met such an untimely fate in a foreign country. I am quite repentant now, and did her injustice. I own it."

"I knew you were generous," said the young man, "ardent, and noble. I quite understand you; and it is what I would have expected."

"It is not," she said, very naturally, "until these things come home to ourselves that we understand the full force of such a blow. I shall never judge anyone harshly again."

There was such a change, such a tenderness and feeling, in her manner, that Charles looked at her astonished. He had judged her unkindly, and there were sins of that sort on his own head. He found an inexpressibly soothing effect in her company, a kind of pleasure and sympathy, which he had never known before.

We need not linger on this curious process—or passage, rather—which has been repeated over and over again, through all the annals of human character. It is a very old story; and lady readers particularly can furnish, by instinct, the chapters that are to conclude it. What this new-found sympathy produced can be imagined: a sort of rest and pleasure, which presently began to stretch over the thing itself to the person. And after three or four days, when business took off Mr. Benbow, it was arranged that young Mr. Charles should wait for some time longer—not to prepare for his American voyage, of which he had made no mention whatever. Why should he, he thought; there was surely time enough when the day fixed drew near.

We know that pleasant little history—or, it may be, an invented apologue—of the disconsolate widow and her husband's monument; and which, exaggerated as it is, holds a sort of compendium of all the little weak points of human nature—of course, disguised: how the tomb was to be as magnificent as money could make it; and how, with every month or two, it became gradually dwindled, shorn of this and that ornament, until at length it shrank into a plain and inexpensive slab. Thus it is, very often, with a grief that is unduly extravagant, or bestowed on an unfitted object.

The living object began gradually to take the place of the one that was gone for ever. He began to see a number of new, hitherto undiscovered beauties in the young lady's character. This tenderness and interest had the most prodigious effect on him. He felt the older image fading out gradually—even though he was indignant as it did so. Who can blame him? We might be severe on a man of forty; but a boy has no logic, no consistency.

He fixed the day after to-morrow to go away. The day after to-morrow arrived, and the Duke said to him—

"Why do you go away, Benbow? There is no necessity. I assure you, we like having you here, and would like you to stay. Of course, if you *have* business—"

Lady Rosa said to him, "I really wish that you could stay. It cheers up papa."

Of course he remained. It was *flattering*, thus being pressed. Is not flattery the great lever by which all the large weights of the world are lifted? It is not self-interest, nor pride, nor love of money, nor love of self, so much as flattery. It does all the work.

That day arrived. The Baronet, rival, and enemy of the young Charles, looking at him with fierce eyes, as who should say, "What business have you here—a creature like *you*—a mere schoolboy?" Could he leave under such conditions—leave the ground to an insolent man of the world, who presumed on his being older and knowing more? Indeed, he would do nothing of the kind. It would look like cowardice. So *pride* intervened here, and kept him just yet another—"day after to-morrow." In short, it was very much as at a Pantomime, where there are thick veils after veils of gauze let down between us and the gorgeous realms of delight. Veil after veil was descending slowly between our hero and the memory of the idol of his heart, as she had been. The salve which he laid to his soul was, "there was no hurry." Those tender offices to her memory could be paid later.

We need not linger over this passage. The Baronet stayed on. So did he. The former grew more and more ardent; and at last, one evening, when she was sitting beside Mr. Charles, very agitated and downcast, he grew sympathetic, and pressed for confidence.

"You are ill, Lady Rosa," he said, "or in low spirits. Tell me—consult me."

And after much hesitation, and delay, and pressing—a very delightful occupation for the one who presses—she was brought to confess she was unhappy—miserable. She would have to make a decision next morning. Her father wished to go away. He did not like this sort of thing. He wished her to make up her mind—and—and—there was one who could not be put off longer—she must give him a final answer—yes or no. She had done all she could to stave it off.

But why—what advice could he give? asked the young man, in a perfect flutter. Such advice would naturally be suspected, as self-interested. If she liked this person—this overbearing Baronet—

It was easy to see what this beginning would end in. It was like a weight toppling over the edge of a hill, and which must then go rolling down. So did our hero, forgetting everything, go rushing down that hill—straight into a proposal.

He hardly knew how he did it. He was accepted; and the wicked Baronet retired, routed and mortified, from the place.

A brilliant prospect opened before him. It was a great and glorious match. A Duke's daughter! How people would talk and wonder! He began to feel the pride and glory of the thing. The poor Lydia—the actress! Well, that would never have done! He trembled as he thought of the rash, headlong step he had taken—the effects of which might have endured for his whole life long. Poor Lydia! Still, it was all for the best, and he had been providentially delivered from the consequences of his own wild act.

The young man was wild with triumph and excitement. Now, indeed, he saw the splendour and glory of the match. It came on him quite "with a burst." A Duke's son-in-law! To be in the highest ranks—living "in state," as it were—for the rest of his life! It was wonderful. And then entered a feeling of vanity at his own powers and gifts having brought about such a consummation. He must be very clever, he felt; and was really under the delusion that it was his own talents, attractions, and what not, that had arranged the whole affair.

With what pride did he ask the Duke for a carriage, to drive into the next town, to go to the telegraph office; and with what greater pride did he hear that potentate's gracious and most affectionate reply!

"My dear Charles, we have done with these forms now. You are my son, and you must order and call for what you like, without consulting me!"

He drove in, and wrote the following telegram:—

"MY DEAR FATHER—What you wished has been done. All has been settled. And they are very kind. She is an angel!"

Alas for the poor actress, now lying in the far-off country. Yet still he felt no reproach.

"Had she been alive, and I was merely pledged to her, that would have been different. I should have been bound in honour. But now, I can do more. I am not bound to a monastic vow of celibacy."

The next day arrived Mr. Benbow, who received his son calmly and in a friendly way before company. But when they were alone, he went towards him, put his arms about him, and strained him to his breast.

"You are a noble, generous, gallant fellow," he said, "and I am proud of you. I cannot tell you, too, how I admire your talents and abilities, for you have done all this yourself. You have shown abilities and tact worthy of a man double your years. For there were enormous difficulties in the case; and, though you lost ground at first, still you more than made it up. And though this is a small matter, and not of so much importance—only concerning poor me—you have made your father's heart infinitely happy—more happy than I have felt for years. This was all that was wanting to give us a firm foundation. Now I shall be able to move the empire almost. Yes, absurd as it would sound, I may yet be able to do that even. No one knows what is in this head. The next step shall be to have you in Parliament—the next, a peerage—the next, office for myself. Now, my dear boy, ask what you like, do what you like. Wait only, and you shall see the noble settlement I shall make on you. Would you have the Castle to live in? Say so. I shall contrive another, and give it up to you cheerfully. Only show me some way by which you would like me to exhibit my gratitude and sense of what you have done for me."

The young man was bewildered by these dazzling pictures. He was supremely happy. He began, too, to discover fresh charms in the young lady who had "undertaken" him;

and who, though not beautiful, had the attraction of good-humour and gentility to recommend her. It was, indeed, a most entrancing time for him. He seemed to be in a dream. The next day arrived, and one of the most sumptuous ornaments that were ever devised, and worthy of a Duke's daughter.

The news of that alliance, spread about, caused the greatest excitement. It was a fresh homage to Mr. Benbow's wonderful powers. People threw up their hands—"Well, that Benbow beats anything! He is the most persevering plotter. He can do anything he lays his mind to. Now, he has been burrowing and scheming at that marriage for years, and at last he has brought it about. A wonderfully clever and persevering man, after all, and deserved to succeed. Presently there would be no enduring him, and he would take the command of the Duke himself."

The due regulation ceremonies went forward—the millinery, selection of bridesmaids, solicitor business, all advancing with a solemn and dignified march to the grand portals of marriage.

The day was fixed. The presents were exhibited. The great semi-French Mantellini, who was charged with the outfitting, was working on steadily to the end; and a few ladies were admitted to have a view of the noble and costly "robes," placed round the room, like figures at a waxwork. Everybody was in admiration. Invitations had gone forth, and Banff Castle was getting ready for a more magnificent gathering of guests than it had ever yet seen within its walls.

LOTHAIR.

IN the first week of the present month, "Lothair" made its appearance simultaneously in England and America. After a long rest of nearly a quarter of a century, the brilliant and versatile author of "Vivian Grey" takes his pen in hand once more, and gives the world a novel. It is about twenty-three years since "Tancred" appeared; but the style of Mr. Disraeli's latest production is so precisely similar to that of his latest but one, that, notwithstanding the number of years which separates them, there is no perceptible change in plot, sentiment, con-

"Lothair." By the Right Honourable B. DISRAELI. London: Longmans, Green, & Co. 1870.

struction, or the want of a moral, common to them both. And, from internal evidence, the reader might be led to suppose that one followed hard upon the other. Who Tancred was we well know. He was the son of "the Duke and Duchess of Bellamont, the handsomest couple in England;" and if he had not been called Tancred all through the book, he would have been called by his title, Lord Montacute. All this is very clear and very satisfactory in "Tancred;" but, after a careful perusal of "Lothair," it may seem strange that one should be obliged to confess that Lothair himself is still a mystery. Is he earl, marquis, or duke?—and at the end of the third volume the question must remain unanswered. But, for choice, we should say a duke. This lucky youth is handsome and wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice, and is described by Mr. Disraeli as being clever, and endowed with more than the average amount of talent and common sense. But his speeches and actions do not show it. He is weak and vacillating. He is a long time in making up his mind; and, when he has made it up, the most trifling accident will serve to prevent him from taking the action you would expect from him. He is an amiable Cræsus, with a great deal more money than he can possibly spend with comfort to himself or advantage to others. And he is the owner of a great many more castles, parks, and town houses than he can possibly inhabit. He is unselfish, and inclined to be generous. Having a trifling sum—a bagatelle of £200,000—he has no immediate use for, he thinks proper to give it away. But Lothair is not steady in his purpose. First he entertains the very laudable project of laying the money out in model cottages on his estates. First thoughts in novels, as well as in fact, are often best: for, after promising the money for the erection of a Roman Catholic cathedral at Westminster, he at last, through the influence of a very beautiful and accomplished enthusiast—a married lady, distinguished as Theodora—gives his £200,000, and very nearly his own life, in the cause of Italian Unity and General Garibaldi. His magnificence throughout the book is princely. He desires to present Theodora, the wife of Colonel Campian, with a trifling mark of his regard. He has heard her say she is fond of pearls, has seen her wear a star of pearls. Accordingly, on pearls his youthful

mind is set. He takes a Bond-street tradesman, one Mr. Ruby, into his confidence—in fact, pays him a visit at what we suppose he would term his shop; but it is such a splendid mine of treasure, that we feel the poverty of our language in lacking a word equal to the importance of the occasion.

Down Bond-street, accordingly, Lothair walks—of course, "in the blaze of fashionable hours;" and this walk gives the author an opportunity of telling us what Bond-street is early in a morning.

This is not bad in its way about the sloping board of a fishmonger's shop; and is, besides, a fair specimen of the general style of the descriptions in the book:—

"The palm, perhaps, would be given to the fishmongers, with their exuberant exhibitions, grouped with skill, startling often with strange forms, dazzling with prismatic tints, and breathing the invigorating redolence of the sea."

This is exuberant indeed. And we shall now regard the displays of fish in fashionable streets in a new light. However, we differ from Mr. Disraeli in one matter—we award the palm, not to the fish, but to the windows of Mr. Ruby and his fraternity. To him we return.

Among turquoises and Golconda diamonds in such prodigal profusion, Lothair might have been so dazzled as to lose his presence of mind. He did not, however. He wanted pearls:—

"'Very interesting,' said Lothair; 'but I want pearls. That necklace you have shown me is like the necklace of a doll. I want pearls such as you see them in Italian pictures—Titians and Giorgiones—such as a Queen of Cyprus would wear. I want ropes of pearls.'"

But there was a difficulty in the way of "ropes of pearls." Mr. Ruby feared he had not got them. He says, "'Lady Bideford had something of that kind,'" but her ladyship's "'are in Chancery at this very moment. . . . The Justinianis have ropes of pearls. Madame Justiniani, of Paris, I have been told, gives a rope to every one of her children when they marry.'" But, of course, as Lothair is neither Lord High Chancellor nor a daughter of Madame Justiniani, of Paris, he cannot have his pearls from either of the caskets mentioned by Mr. Ruby, so far. Then the jeweller tells a pleasing anecdote of some pearls in the possession of the Duchess of Havant. They are "the finest in this country." Mr. Ruby advises her Grace thus:—"Wear them whenever

you can; wear them at breakfast; and her Grace follows my advice—she does wear them at breakfast:” which is somewhat unusual, but not more so than other treatment to which they are subjected. Says Mr. Ruby:—

“I go down to Havant Castle every year to see her Grace’s pearls, and I wipe every one of them myself, and let them lie on a sunny bank in the garden in a westerly wind for hours and days together. Their complexion would have been ruined had it not been for this treatment. Pearls are like girls, my Lord—they require quite as much attention.”

At last Mr. Ruby recollects some pearls he has offered to Lord Topaz. He runs to fetch them. Lothair objects to be left alone; he says, “if anything is missed hereafter, it will always be recollected that these jewels were in my possession, and I was alone.” However, he is superior to temptation, and presently Mr. Ruby returns “breathless, with a velvet casket.”

“Exactly what I want,” says Lothair in a moment.

With a splendid effort of self-denial, Mr. Ruby adds—

“There shall be no profit on the transaction, and we shall be proud of it. We gave for them four thousand guineas.”

“I will take them with me,” said Lothair, who was afraid if he left them behind, Lord Topaz might arrive in the interval.”

This was a magnificent present to lay at the feet of a married lady with whom he was only slightly acquainted. But to the grandeur of the doings of all the people in “Lothair” there is no end. In a certain way it is the grandest book that ever was written. “Coningsby” and “Tancred” were not wanting in magnificence, but “Lothair” leaves them far behind. We move in an overpowering, superfine world of princes and princesses, dukes, duchesses, cardinals, and monsignori. Every house is a palace, every country seat a fairy castle. The curtains are all hangings, and the beds couches. The atmosphere is roseate; we dine every day off gold plate and costly Sèvres. The viands are all epicurean, the drinks nectar. We are not surprised to hear one of the characters call for “some cold meat” at one of these banquets. The splendour of “Lothair” is appalling.

That Mr. Disraeli should revel in his descriptions of Brentham and Vauxe and Muriel Towers, three country seats of three several noblemen, is not to be wondered at.

But when he describes a dinner at Lothair’s solicitor’s house in Tyburnia, and the suburban retreat of the *almost* ruined Southern American, Colonel Campian, his taste for the fine has not abated one single jot.

At the house of Mrs. Putney Giles, the solicitor’s lady—

“The repast was sumptuous. Lothair thought the dinner would never end, there were so many dishes, and apparently all of the highest pretension. . . . A gorgeous menu of gold and white typography was by the side of each guest. The table seemed literally to groan under vases and gigantic flagons, and in its midst rose a mountain of silver.” . . .

And among the guests of Mrs. Putney Giles was the Cardinal. He left her saloons to pay a visit to the St. Jeromes, where he found at least equal magnificence:—

“A marble hall and a marble staircase, lofty chambers, with silk or tapestried hangings, gilded cornices, and painted ceilings, gave a glimpse of almost Venetian splendour, and rare in our metropolitan homes of this age.”

But certainly not at all improbable in the family mansion of a very rich Roman Catholic nobleman in St. James’s-square.

Theodora, and her half-ruined husband, Colonel Campian, live at Belmont, which seems to be somewhere near Richmond Park. Lothair rides there on his horse, and, approaching the house by a road through the grounds, he finds—

“Suddenly the confined scene expanded: wide lawns spread out before him, shadowed with the dark forms of many huge cedars, and blazing with flower-beds of every hue. The house was also apparent, a stately mansion of hewn stone, with wings, and a portico of Corinthian columns, and backed by deep woods.”

The spot was given to a Minister of State by a gracious sovereign “whereon to raise a palace and a garden, and find occasionally Tusculan repose.”

Theodora was at home; and Lothair walked through two rooms, or, rather, “two spacious and lofty chambers.” And here, in his passion for upholstery and *bric à brac*, Mr. Disraeli actually tells us at length what they did not contain. Here were no—

“Cabinets and clocks of French kings, or tables of French queens; no chairs of Venetian senators; no candelabra that had illumined the doges of Genoa; no ancient porcelain of rare schools, and ivory carvings, and choice enamels.”

But, lacking these ornamental appendages, the rooms of Theodora were still habitable, even to Mr. Disraeli’s characters:—

“The walls were hung with the masterpieces of

modern art, chiefly of the French school—Ingres, Delaroche, and Scheffer.”

The grounds of this residence, in which the Campians dwelt merely *en garçon*, were tolerably fine, even after the beauties of Brentham:—

“The room opened on a terrace, adorned with statues and orange trees, and descending gently into a garden in the Italian style, in the centre of which was a marble fountain of many figures.”

There is no stucco in Mr. Disraeli’s book. All is marble. These grounds at Belmont were not extensive, but “were only separated from the royal park by a wire fence,” and—

“On the boundary was a summer-house, in the shape of a classic temple; one of those pavilions of pleasure which nobles loved to raise in the last century.” . . .

And, we may add, authors love to describe in this.

In another part of this garden, “upon a pedestal of porphyry, rose the statue of a female in marble.” This was a statue of Theodora herself, of whose character we will say something in due course. These extracts will show sufficiently the style of splendour in which Mr. Disraeli’s characters live. The houses are palaces, and the very harbours and summer-houses become “pavilions of pleasure” under the author’s magic wand. Indeed, the pleasure of reading “Lothair” is marred by the oppressively palatial atmosphere that pervades it.

Now, let us turn to the plot and the characters.

Lothair is the posthumous son of a nobleman, of what degree we are not told. His mother dies soon after his father, and he is left, doubly an orphan, to the care of two guardians: a Scotch peer—a Whig and a Presbyterian; and a Church of England clergyman, who “goes over” after his appointment, and, at the time the history begins, is a cardinal of the Romish Church. Lothair has been almost entirely under the charge of the peer; and, when the scene opens, he is an undergraduate at Christ Church. He visits Brentham, the seat of a duke, the father of his Oxford friend, Lord Bertram. Here, in a few days, he falls in love with the Duke’s daughter, the Lady Corisande—a name which we devoutly hope has no prototype in the matter of fact world in which godfathers and godmothers are necessary to the conferring of a distinctive prenomen.

Lothair, acting upon the suggestion of his feelings, asks the permission of the Duchess to pay his addresses to the lady, which is refused on general grounds. Accordingly the youth gives up the notion of possessing his Corisande, by becoming at once enamoured of Clare Arundel, the daughter of Lord St. Jerome, who is a Roman Catholic. He visits Vauxe, the seat of the St. Jeromes; and there it is the object of the Cardinal, Lady St. Jerome, and Clare herself, to make Lothair a convert to the Romish faith. He is there during Holy Week, and is present at the services in the private chapel. He is, not unnaturally, much impressed by these services, and partly persuaded by the arguments of the wily Cardinal. “Manifold art” had “combined to create” the chapel, and make it “an exquisite temple.” During the Tenebræ—

“The altar was desolate and the choir was dumb . . . with each psalm and canticle a light of the altar was extinguished, till at length the ‘Miserere’ was muttered, and all became darkness. A sound as of a distant and rising wind was heard, and a crash, as it were the fall of trees in a storm. The earth is covered with darkness, and the veil of the temple is rent.”

At length—

“A priest brings forth a concealed light of silvery flame from a corner of the altar. This is the light of the world, and announces the resurrection; and then all rise up and depart in silence.

“As Lothair rose, Miss Arundel passed him, with streaming eyes.

“‘There is nothing in this holy office,’ said Father Coleman to Lothair, ‘to which every real Christian might not give his assent.’

“‘Nothing,’ said Lothair, with great decision.”

Miss Arundel ultimately takes the veil, and enters a convent; and Lothair escapes from Vauxe without becoming a Roman Catholic, and still master of his £200,000, to meet the Campians, and fall into a desperate Platonic love for Theodora—in other words, Mrs. Campian.

We pause here in our *résumé* of the plot to point out the resemblance between Tancred and Lothair. They are, indeed, the same character. Tancred proposed to penetrate the Asian mystery. He says to his astonished father, the Duke of Bellamont:—

“‘In a word, it is the Holy Land that occupies my thoughts; and I propose to make a pilgrimage to the sepulchre of my Saviour.’”

Lothair “began to meditate on two great ideas—the reconciliation of Christendom, and the influence of architecture on reli-

gion." Tancred went off to Jerusalem, and so did Lothair in the end. Tancred fell into a state of love for Lady Bertie; and Lothair finds his Lady Bertie in Mrs. Campian. In "Tancred" we have a splendid coming of age, and celebrations and rejoicings, and oxen roasted whole. In "Lothair," many chapters describe the festivities at Muriel Towers on Lothair attaining his majority; and the doings on a similar occasion in "Tancred" pale into insignificance by the side of these later revels. Whole hecatombs are sacrificed, and the entire neighbourhood feasted in the park.

To resume our sketch of the plot. At Muriel Towers, on his twenty-first birthday, Lothair collects all the prominent personages in the history. Both guardians, the peer and the Cardinal; the daughters of the peer, the Ladies Flora and Grizell Falkirk, two tall Scotch girls—"They moved about like young giraffes in an African forest, but looked bright and happy;" the Campians; the St. Jeromes; Monsignori and Fathers in attendance on his Eminence the Cardinal; Lord St. Aldegonde and his wife; the Bishop of the diocese; Lady Corisande, with the Duke and Duchess. A host of county notables complete this party, to whose doings a dozen chapters are devoted.

The magnificence of the whole proceedings at Muriel is rather troublesome; but the conversations are brilliant, and sparkle with bright sayings. The bids of the two parties for Lothair, and the by-play of the Cardinal on the one side and the Bishop on the other, are very amusing and well done. Hugó Bohun and St. Aldegonde are very good characters. "Lothair's (Ecumenical Council," Bohun calls the gathering at Muriel Towers.

The Bishop is a splendid champion of the Protestant cause:—

"The Bishop was particularly playful on the morrow at breakfast. Though his face beamed with Christian kindness, there was a twinkle in his eye which seemed not entirely superior to mundane self-complacency, even to a sense of earthly merriment. His seraphic raillery elicited sympathetic applause from the ladies. . . . His lambent flashes sometimes even played over the Cardinal, whose cerulean armour, nevertheless, remained always unsashed."

There is something very happy and true to life in this sketch of the Bishop, blessed with a small and easily governed diocese.

The worthy prelate's nerves received a severe shock next day from St. Aldegonde.

This nobleman came down to breakfast on Sunday morning in "his shooting-jacket of brown velvet and a pink shirt, and no cravat":—

"The meal was over. The Bishop was standing near the mantelpiece, talking to the ladies, the Archdeacon and the Chaplain and some other clergy a little in the background. . . . Lord St. Aldegonde suddenly exclaimed, in a loud voice, and with the groan of a rebellious Titan, 'How I hate Sunday!'

"'Granville!' exclaimed Lady St. Aldegonde, turning pale. There was a general shudder.

"'I mean in a country house,' said Lord St. Aldegonde; 'of course, I mean in a country house. I do not dislike it when alone, and I do not dislike it in London. But Sunday in a country house is infernal!'

However, he subsequently sends a sort of half-apology by his wife to the scandalized prelate.

By the influence of Theodora—the MARY ANNE of the secret societies, called in honour of her by this not uncommon feminine name—Lothair gives his £200,000 and his services to the cause of Freedom, and serves as a captain in the Italian campaign of 1867. Theodora is wounded, and dies in the arms of Lothair:—

"'Adored being!' murmured Lothair, with streaming eyes, 'there is no wish of yours I will not fulfil!'

She makes him promise never to enter the Roman communion:—

"'But promise me,' said Theodora.

"'I promise,' said Lothair.

"'And now,' she said, 'embrace me; for I wish that your spirit should be upon me as mine departs!'

The Colonel, her husband, though wounded, is at hand; but Theodora desires to breathe her last in the embrace of Lothair.

Subsequently the hero is wounded severely himself, and carried off the field of battle in an ambulance to Rome.

Here he falls into the hands of the St. Jeromes. He recovers at length, and is the victim of a story, circulated by the priests, that he has been visited and succoured by the Blessed Virgin in person. He is looked upon as the "happiest and most favoured of men," and made to take part in a great religious ceremonial of thanksgiving for his recovery. His friends in England naturally conclude that he has become a Roman Catholic. He escapes at length from the hands of his watchers, and arrives at Malta, where he finds Mr. Phœbus, a very wealthy

artist, married to a lady of Aryan race, the daughter of a great prince.

They go to Joppa and Jerusalem, of course; and we have much talk concerning Aryan and Semitic types. When Lothair returns to England, he goes back to Brent-ham; and after a time is true to his first love, the Lady Corisande. She at once accepts the offer of his hand. The proposal is made in a charming scene in the Lady Corisande's own private garden, which the Duke had given her "in order that she might practise her theory that flower-gardens should be sweet and luxuriant;" and accordingly this parterre is filled with clusters of honeysuckle, sweet-pea, sweet-briar, and jasmine:—

"I wish I had a garden like this at Muriel," said Lothair.

"You could easily make one."

"If you helped me."

They then talked of the pearls which Lothair offered to Theodora, but which she refused to accept. She had placed a slip of paper inside the casket and sealed it up:—

"I had always a wild wish that the person who opened it should be yourself. See, here it is," and he gave her the case. . . . There was the slip of paper which Theodora at the time had placed upon the pearls, and on which she had written some unseen words. They were read now, and ran thus:—

"THE OFFERING OF THEODORA TO LOTHAIR'S BRIDE."

"Let me place them on you now," said Lothair.

"I will wear them as your chains," said Corisande."

When the Duchess asked Lothair where he had been, he replied, "I have been in Corisande's garden, and she has given me a rose."

With that remark the story ends, and we bid adieu to "Lothair" without any feeling of regret. When it was announced that Mr. Disraeli had a new novel in the press, we expected something brilliant. We are satisfied, and we are disappointed. The conversations in "Lothair" are sparkling enough; though those long talks about Aryan and Semitic races are rather tedious. On the whole the book is successful. If anyone else had written "Lothair" it must have commanded attention; but, as the work of the Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli, it will be everywhere read with the greatest avidity. The hero can gain little sympathy, and make few friends; many of the other characters in the book are better. The plot is slight, but it is sufficient to maintain the interest.

In one word, "Lothair" is neither better nor worse than "Coningsby" or "Tancred." It has their good qualities, and more than its share of their faults. The personages are all grand beyond compare; but then Mr. Disraeli's is an exceptional case. If anybody has a right to draw dukes and duchesses, he undoubtedly has; and he never scruples to avail himself of his privilege. In "Lothair" he has rather over-duked us. Everything is too grand. There is no contrast, no loophole of escape, no little oasis of common earth in this vast Sahara of gold and diamonds. The book has no moral; and, we might almost say, the characters have no morals. It is less political than "Coningsby;" but it is very clear that many of the characters are painted from living models, and very little—if any—trouble has been taken by the author to disguise the fact. A Key was published to "Coningsby" in 1844, assigning a real name for every one of Mr. Disraeli's characters. Will there be a key to "Lothair"? It will not be difficult to guess who is Lothair or the Cardinal, Monsignor Catesby or the Oxford professor. Perhaps the initiated can refer all the personages in "Lothair" to their originals. We cannot help thinking that the Roman Catholics are very unfairly dealt with. They are made to hesitate at nothing to secure this rich youth for their Church. Their plot-tings become a caricature as they are delineated in "Lothair." But this may have been intentional on the part of the author. "Lothair" is clever—in places brilliant; but it is not the book to add anything to the literary fame of a very young sexagenarian, who furnished the world with a romance almost before he left the nursery; who has been Premier, and is the leader of the Opposition. But it does him no discredit. It is, after all, neither more nor less than we expected of the author of "Coningsby" and "Tancred."

There is one word that occurs much too often in the book. It is not a pretty word at the best of times; it is always one to be used with discretion. It is, "first-rate." We shall quote it against Mr. Disraeli; and say that, despite his half-century of experience as a novel writer, he has not written a "first-rate" novel. He is as far as ever removed from true art and real beauty. But, at its worst, "Lothair" is clever and very readable.

THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK III.—CHAPTER XI.

CHARLES MORTIMER PAYS A VISIT TO UPPER GORE-STREET.

AFTER being what he called "trapped by the governor," Charles Mortimer thought proper to stay away from the family residence in Grosvenor-square for a couple of days until the storm should have had time to blow over. He spent his days with his friends at Bloombridge, and in sending little notes and bouquets to the woman who had fascinated him, the *nonchalant* Charles Mortimer, as easily and as effectually as she had secured the devotion of that simple youth, Albert Fitzboode.

It was a bright June day, and Mabel's birthday, when the young gentleman mounted his horse, and rode lazily through the Park towards his father's house. He indulged his steed in a walk under the spreading branches of the trees in the Row. Once or twice he stopped for a minute. There was no occasion for being in haste, he felt. He had no desire to fly to Grosvenor-square on the "wings of love;" or, indeed, to make his horse trot there at a respectable pace. However, loiter as you will, at last you must get over a distance of a couple of miles.

Charles Mortimer gave his horse to a servant, and ran up the steps, very jauntily. He met his uncle in the hall.

"Hallo, my boy!" exclaimed Sir Harold, giving him a hearty tap on the shoulder; "why, we have not seen you this week hardly. Your father says you have been unwell. What's the matter—eh?"

"Oh, nothing much, uncle. Headache and cold, or something of that sort. A little bilious, I think. I haven't had a doctor," he added, ingenuously.

"Ah, well, I'm glad you are all right again," said Sir Harold, in his hearty, good-tempered way, still tapping his nephew's shoulder sympathetically. "It is Mabel's birthday you know, of course. Your father said you would be here for that, if you could get up at all."

"Oh," thought Charles, "I have been in bed, have I? I knew the governor dared not split about me."

"Ah, my boy, Charlie!" exclaimed his

father, joining them, and shaking his hand with a look of concern. "Well, we are glad to see you. Mabel and your brother would have been at Bloombridge to-day if you had not come here."

"That they would," said Sir Harold. "We were nearly going to you yesterday."

"You would have been surprised to find me so well," thought Charles.

After a word or two of caution to take care of himself, and a hint that he had brought his illness upon him by his own act, Sir Harold left them.

"My eyes are better to-day than they have been for some time. I can see pretty well the length of my own nose," he said, cheerfully—"a thing I can't often do now. But we old fellows expect to be shaky—not young men like you, Charles. Good-bye."

And he went down the steps and got into the carriage, to go down to his club, supported by the butler's arm.

"One moment," said Robert Mortimer to his son, who was rapidly mounting the staircase; "one moment, sir, of your valuable time."

"I thought, sir, I would go up to the 'Mater' and Mabel at once."

"They can support the loss of your society for five minutes longer, I dare say."

They walked into the library together. There was no fire, but Robert Mortimer took his stand on the hearth rug in that attitude in which a father usually reprimands a son.

"You have been there twice since, I find," said the father.

"I am quite aware that Mr. Brady has been watching me," replied the son. "By Jove! I hate to hoodwink Uncle Harold. I would rather by half have told him the truth: he is such a jolly old brick! It's a shame to deceive him."

"Of course it's nothing to deceive and hoodwink a father," said Robert Mortimer, with sarcastic emphasis.

"I have not deceived you."

"I thought you would have the decency to keep away—to come here, at all events."

"I made no promise of any kind that I know of. Besides, no fellow likes to be watched and dogged wherever he goes," returned Charles, petulantly.

"You compel me to act as I do."

"I don't see it—'pon my soul I don't."

"Charles, for God's sake try to show some respect for your father!" said Robert,

with an awful effort to be calm. "Look at the sacrifices I have made for you—am willing to make for you. I actually do not hesitate to tell a falsehood to screen you."

"Um, that's nothing new," muttered the young man, in an inaudible tone.

"You are jeopardizing your chances for life, and—and mine too."

"How? I don't understand what you mean."

"Oh! I think you know, Charles. What a life you lead! Gad! I don't know who is to supply you with money! All sorts of dissipation and extravagance."

"You were not quite a saint."

"What do you mean, sir?" asked his father, angrily.

"Brady has told tales of you before to-day."

"I'll discharge any servant of mine who tells a parcel of lies about me—and to my own son."

"You won't send Brady off. I wish to gad you would."

"I can't find money for you."

"I don't recollect that you ever did. I suspect that Sir Harold finds it for us both."

"Are you here to insult me?" exclaimed his father, gulping down his wrath. "If it were not for your uncle, I would order my servants to refuse you admittance to the house! I'd—I'd cut you off without a shilling!"

Charles was quite cool—provokingly cool, his father thought, as he became more and more angry.

"You won't order me out of the place, you know; and you can't very well cut me off with a shilling. There's an entail, I believe."

"You're—you're the—the greatest scoundrel in England!" gasped the elder man.

"Always with the one exception of my worthy father!" replied the younger, with a bow.

There was a minute's truce. Charles walked to the door; he had his hand on the knob.

"Charles," said his father, "I may have been—hasty; but you are so desperately provoking. I cannot bear with you, and keep my temper."

"You wish to make friends?" said his son. "It is some time since we were on very amiable terms."

"It is not my fault, Charles," said his father.

"Well, we will not enter into any further argument, or possibly we may be tempted to say very rude things. It is just as well we should understand each other."

"Precisely."

"In the first place, I have a not unreasonable regard for liberty. I mean, I don't wish to be watched."

"I think only of your own good."

"I know what I am doing, and the risk I run."

"You know Mabel—"

"I never loved Mabel; and having her name for ever dinned into my ears is not the way to make me love her."

"You are not going to make a perfect madman of yourself, and refuse to marry her."

"Oh, dear no, sir. I will marry her; but I will do it at my own time. I won't be driven to it."

"I am glad to see you are so far reasonable, Charles," said his father, softening slightly. "It is her birthday, and of course you ought to give her something. A bracelet, or a necklet, or something. It should be handsome."

"My allowance and the present state of my pocket won't allow me to do the generous to the extent I could wish."

"We are going to give her this—your mother and I, I mean," said his father, producing a morocco case containing a pretty diamond star.

"Ah! very nice," said Charles. "I wish I could afford something of the sort. I mean to send at once to Covent-garden for a *ter* bob bouquet. I can't stand jewellery."

"There is a bracelet which matches this. I will get it at once from Bond-street. Do not go to see Mabel until it comes, and we will give her both together."

Father and son entered the room in which Mabel, Miss Margaret, and Mrs. Mortimer were seated. Their faces were bright and smiling; on neither was there left a trace of the storm that had so lately agitated them.

Wishing Mabel many happy returns of her birthday, Charles clasped the glittering bracelet round her wrist, and his father gave the beautiful girl the diamond star, accompanying the gift with the most appropriate and graceful little speech he could invent



Once a Week.]

“SOMEBODY FOR MR. GROBEY.”—Page 370. (PHIZ.)

[May 28, 1870.

for the occasion. Charles remained for some time with the ladies. He never in his life was more agreeable and fascinating, talking and laughing gaily; and promising never to be ill again if he could possibly help it.

"You will dine with us, of course, Charlie," said his mother, as he took his leave.

"At all events come to the dance," said Mabel; "if your health permit you," she added, with an arch glance.

"I shall be here for both. I would not miss either for the world."

And, making a graceful bow, he left them.

"Poor Charlie," said his mother, from the sofa on which she reclined—it was one of her very languid days; "he is only too much like me. I do *not* think he is strong."

Charles, whose gray trousers, frock-coat, and lavender gloves were all perfect in their way, strolled in the sun along a street or two, then called a Hansom, and directed the driver to take him to a certain number in Upper Gore-street. With Belgravia and Mayfair he was perfectly acquainted, but to the unfashionable region of Woburnia, where Upper Gore-street lay, he was wholly a stranger. The cabman might have driven him two or three miles out of his way, and he would hardly have detected it. He stopped the cab once. In Regent-street he got out at a florist's shop, and inspected his stock of "button-holes." He was not easily satisfied. At last he selected a delicate spray of Stephanotis, and stuck it in his coat.

"Now go on," he said, as he sprang into the vehicle.

They were not long before they arrived at their destination.

"Wait," he said to the driver, as he knocked at the door and pulled the bell.

The little maid, looking up at him from the area below, was amazed; he was so much more splendid than their ordinary visitors. She rushed up to open the door.

"Is Mrs. Grafton in?" he asked, handing his card to the maid.

Mrs. Grafton met him in the hall.

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Grafton, I ventured to call upon you. I hope you will pardon my intrusion; but after the unfortunate *contretemps* the other night I thought I must come up to explain."

And he made a dozen apologies for calling.

"I would as soon ride in a cab as a browham, Mr. Mortimer. I ain't used to riding in browhams."

"I hope you got home all right?"

"Oh, yes; very nice and comfortable, thank you, sir."

Charles looked about him with a disappointed air.

"May I ask after your adorable niece, Mrs. Grafton?"

"She is a talented gurl, isn't she, sir?"

"Admirable! wonderful!" he replied, expecting to see her every moment.

"She is quite well, I thank you, sir—quite well."

"I wish the old woman wouldn't sir me. I hate to be sir'd. Wonder where Bertie Howard is?" thought Charles.

"My niece is gone out for an airing, sir. The doctor says she is to take the air as much as possible."

"Doosid—a—that is—a—to be sure. Does she go out for long at a time, Mrs. Grafton?"

"Well, it rather depends, sir."

"Doosid bore!" Charles muttered.

"Sir! I beg your pardon."

"Of course; yes—I mean a fine thing—air, for one's health."

"Yes, sir. Mr. Grobey takes all the exercise he can."

"Who is Mr. Grobey, may I ask, Mrs. Grafton?"

"Dear me, now!" exclaimed Mrs. Grafton, in considerable surprise. "Why, I thought everybody had heard of him. He's the tragedian of the Victoria."

"Oh! the tragedian of the Victoria. I am afraid I shall seem very ignorant, but where is the Victoria?"

"Not know where the 'Vic' is?" cried the old lady, throwing up her hands in amazement. "Dear me, now! May I ask if you are long from the country, sir?"

"Well—h'm—that is, not long—not very long, at least."

"You should see the 'Vic,' sir. Why, it's one of the sights of London. And Mr. Grobey—he's wonderful thought of there. He brought my niece out. She did not get on very well at the Victoria—not so well as we should have been led to expect. Mr. Grobey says to me, 'Mrs. G.'—meaning Mrs. Grafton: it's his way of speaking, being—though I say it—old friends, for he

has lodged with me for years, and first put it into my poor girl's head to go on the stage—a thing I never did approve of.”

Charles nodded while the old lady took breath.

“But you see, sir, at the Variety the people who go is quite different. Though Bertie doesn't act much, she, in a way, stands in front in those burlesques, and looks about her.”

“She looks beautiful always,” said Charles.

“I declare theatre-going will drive me crazy, I see so much of it, sir. I never let her go without me, and I never will.”

“You will excuse me, I know, for what seemed rudeness the other night. I felt I must explain, and apologize to you, Mrs. Grafton.”

“Oh! don't mention it, sir—pray don't! Do have a glass of sherry, sir, before you go.”

“No—oh, no; thank you.”

But Mrs. Grafton had gone out of the room, apparently down to the cellar, for she was some time absent.

The table had a display of books upon it. An album of photographs lay open in the centre. Charles took it up, and in doing so a loose photograph fell to the ground. He stooped to pick it up from the folds of the long cloth. As he replaced it in the book, the face caught his eye. It was a portrait of Reginald Erle.

He coloured slightly. Replaced the card in the book.

“So he knows her! This—this is a gentleman I have seen somewhere, I think,” he said, to Mrs. Grafton, who returned at that moment.

“Mr. Erle, sir. A very nice, kind gentleman he is. I've known him from his infancy. He lives here now.”

“Oh! I shall perhaps be interested to hear—that is—thank you.”

And he drank off the glass of sherry; and very hot and strong it was. He made a grimace in his handkerchief, as he wiped his moustache.

“Oh, thank you, Mrs. Grafton; yes, very nice sherry. No; no more. I must run away. Good-day. My compliments to Miss Howard.”

“So Mr. Reginald Erle is to be in my way, is he?” thought Charles, as the cabman drove him to the Park. “How can he be got out of the way? It will not be prudent for me to go there until he is—will it?”

CHAPTER XII.

GROBEY ASKS A FAVOUR OF ERLE.

“MR. ERLE, can I have one word with you,” was what Reginald heard, spoken in a well-known basso profundo, as he swallowed his last gulp of coffee on the morning after Charles Mortimer's visit to Upper Gore-street. The accents were instantly recognizable as those of the eminent tragedian of the Victoria Theatre, and the actor's bulky person followed his remark into the room.

“Certainly, Mr. Grobey, I am quite at your service. I have just finished my breakfast, as you see. I presume you have breakfasted also?”

“I have partaken of that customary matutinal meal, in a way,” said the actor, with a melancholy and lackadaisical air. “My rasher is uncut, my rolls untouched.”

“Why, what is the matter?” demanded Erle, briskly. “Nothing serious, I hope.”

“Yes, Mr. Erle; something very serious—for me—if not for another.” He rolled his large eyes wildly, finally fixing their gaze upon the ceiling. “My appetite—for food is gone.”

“Oh dear,” replied Erle; “that is always a bad sign.”

“It is only too true. Would you mind,” he said, suddenly, “just stepping into my sanctum. I feel I can unbosom the load that fills my breast better there than here.”

Erle readily complied with the request of his old acquaintance, and followed—the actor sadly and slowly leading the way. Mr. Robert Grobey had two sitting-rooms, a large one and a small one. In the former he received his pupils, and entertained his friends. The latter was the sanctum. Here it was his custom to study his parts, compose his “make-up,” and attitudinize before a tall mirror that was hung on the walls. When they were seated Reginald asked, “What is the trouble that oppresses the heart of Mr. Grobey?”

“Heart, sir—that is the word. You have said it. Love, sir”—here he heaved a mighty sigh—“love unheard, unknown, unrequited: 'tis the cause, 'tis the cause.”

“I think I can guess the object.”

“Bertie,” exclaimed the stout tragedian, rising and pacing to and fro. “Al-ber-ta, could I but summon courage to pour into thine ear—but no, I am unequal to that task.”

Erle suggested a written declaration of the state of Grobey's affections.

From a writing-case the tragedian instantly produced a number of blurred and blotted pieces of paper, the writing on which was nearly illegible from frequent alterations and corrections. These compositions were, for the most part, effusions in verse, the tragic beginning after this fashion :—

"Oh! fair and lovely maid,
Thy charms shall never fade;"

and so on through thirty lines of glowing rhapsody. The comic ending, possibly, thus:—

"In the eyes, most beauteous Bertie,
Of your Bob—who's only thirty."

Grobey gave a melancholy smile as his eye fell upon the various efforts of his muse.

"They won't do. Ideas do not flow equal to such an occasion."

"They are very complimentary, and cannot fail, at least, to please," said Erle, trying to cheer the disconsolate actor. "Every woman, you know, worth the name, loves to be the idol of a sonneteer."

"Compliment," said Grobey, striking an effective attitude—a sort of Romeo addressing an imaginary Juliet somewhere about the region of the chandelier. "'Tis not for me to bandy compliments. Oh, Alberta! Mr. Erle, I have watched the growth of that tender flower almost from her childhood. I have seen her, and I have loved as truly as ever man loved in this world. I see her now—her matchless beauty, her exquisitely chiselled features, her long waving tresses, her bright eyes, her bewitching smiles! Her image is always here"—placing his hand on his heart. "Do I harangue Ophelia, do I pour out my love to Juliet—it is on her my mental gaze is fixed. A thousand times I have been on the point of declaring my affection. But I have hesitated—doubted if I ought to disturb her happiness. She sees in me a friend: a friend I am to her, and nothing more. Were I to tell my love, she would reject me; and I must lose for ever the joy of seeing her—hearing her sweet voice!"

His own voice was tremulant with suppressed emotion as he uttered the words.

"I will be advised by you," he continued, "if you will take the trouble to give me your advice. What ought I to do?"

"Well, it's really such a distressing case," said Erle, smiling; "I think if I were you,

and could not make up my mind to address the lady herself, I would say a word on the subject to her aunt."

"Would you?" asked Grobey.

"Yes. What do you think of that?"

"I have thought of it before; but her aunt has less influence than she had with Bertie. While she was here, and before that unfortunate night at the 'Vic,' she was, somehow, different from what she is now."

"How do you mean?"

"Success has spoilt her. I always hated a burlesque as a degradation of a noble art. Burlesque has spoilt her."

"Indeed!"

"Bouquets and letters enough to turn her head."

"Her aunt is always with her."

"Yes, yes. I feel it though. I am to blame. I did the mischief. We never ought to have allowed her to go near a stage. Now it is too late. And she will never act."

"Would you do me this favour, Mr. Erle?" said Grobey, as Erle was taking his leave; "would you kindly hint—that is, mention, now, for me to Mrs. G., that I—I love her niece to—to distraction?"

"Had not you better do it? You will do it better than I shall."

"No. Mrs. G. will listen to you."

"Well, I will undertake the responsibility of intimating to her the state of your affections, as you seem so much to desire it."

"Thank you—a thousand thanks!" exclaimed Grobey, taking Erle's hand. "This kindness I shall never forget."

That night, as Bertie was leaving for the theatre, Erle met her. And then he was not surprised at the depth of Grobey's devotion. She looked perfectly lovely. A white cloak, lined with blue silk, was drawn about her shoulders. Her bodice, under a thick covering of lace, half hid, half showed the snowy whiteness of her faultless bust. Her eyes flashed and sparkled from under their long silken lashes, as she bade Erle "good-night," and entered the cab with her aunt.

"She is beautiful," thought Erle.

On their return, he heard Mrs. Grafton talking rather angrily. The postman had left one letter. It was addressed to Bertie. Her aunt had opened it and read its contents.

"Where is Mr. Grobey? Is he not come in yet?"

"He aint in, ma'am," replied her servant.

"Then I wish you to go at once for him, with my respects. When one wants anybody particularly, they are always out of the way."

Now, there was, hard by the Victoria, a neat and cosy little tavern, with a snug parlour, the floor of which was sprinkled liberally with sawdust. Here a number of select individuals were in the habit of spending half an hour after the performances at the theatre were over. Most of the actors at the "Vic" consumed a nightly glass of steaming whisky-punch in the retirement of the little room; and here our friend Mr. Peter Odger, and other non-professional gentlemen, were accustomed to take their seats and liquor. Here Mrs. Grafton's maid found Mr. Robert Grobey, comfortably seated before a glass of punch, which he had spent some time in mixing with skill and judgment.

"Somebody for Mr. Grobey."

"Mr. Grobey—wanted, if you please," said the barmaid to the theatrical star.

"What in the world does Mrs. G. want me for?" asked Grobey, as he became aware of the presence of the servant-maid.

BADGER'S DEBUT AS HAMLET.

By LITCHFIELD MOSELEY.*

"THAT'S something like a bill," said Jobson, the manager, holding it against the wall, and addressing me as I entered his sanctum. It read as follows:—

REOPENING OF THE

Theatre Royal, Slushington.

Under the sole Management of Mr. LEONARDO JOBSON.

ENGAGEMENT OF THE CELEBRATED AMERICAN
TRAGEDIAN,

MR. TITUS B. BADGER

(From the principal Theatres of the United States, California,
New Zealand, the Sandwich Islands, the Caribbees,
and Timbuctoo!)

WHO WILL APPEAR IN HIS GREAT IMPERSONATION OF

H A M L E T,

AS PERFORMED BY HIM FOR 1231 NIGHTS WITH THE GREATEST
SUCCESS.

The entire Press of the two Hemispheres has unanimously pronounced this Gentleman to be the only successor to Edmund Kean.

SUPPORTED BY A POWERFUL COMPANY, SELECTED FROM THE
PRINCIPAL METROPOLITAN THEATRES.

After which will be presented an entirely

NEW AND ORIGINAL FARCE,
ENTITLED

SKEDADDLING!!!

Notwithstanding the enormous expense of this Engagement,
there will be no advance in the Prices.

* As read by Mr. J. M. Bellow.

"That's something like a bill," again said Jobson, stepping back a few paces in order more fully to admire it. "What do you think of it, eh?"

I had picked up a slight acquaintance with the manager, who was—to use the mildest term possible—a theatrical adventurer, with as many aliases as there are letters in the alphabet: one of those sharp individuals whose trickiness brings the stage into disrepute.

"A very taking poster," I replied.

"Think so?" said he. "There's one fault in it—Badger's name isn't half *large* enough. You wouldn't believe the difference that an inch or two of type makes to a tragedian. Supposing I leave that bill as it is, nobody will think anything of Badger. Give him *two*-inch letters, people will glance at the name, and pass on; increase them to *four*, and they'll wonder who Badger is; put him in *twelve*-inch type, and we shan't know where to seat the people. I'm having some posters done now with letters four feet high, and nothing on them but 'BADGER;' and if they don't draw in the public my name's not—Bless me! if I know what my name is!"

"I should not have thought it," I replied.

"Shouldn't you? Why, if we had Phelps down here, and only gave him ordinary type, I don't believe we should have fifty people in the house."

"Indeed! But who is Badger?" I asked. "I never heard of him."

"No more has anybody else. But we're going to have a dress rehearsal directly, and you shall see him."

"Does he come from America?"

"Not a bit of it. He's a stage-struck young idiot from the Bow-road, who's never been farther west than Pimlico. His name's Tibbetts, and he's clerk to a shoemaker in the city. He fancies he has a genius for tragedy, and has paid me £20 to allow him to appear here for a few nights. Fact! My company never costs me anything for salaries. I always make 'em pay me for the privilege of performing. It suits my pocket, it pleases them, and so neither of us grumble. Mugford!" This was to one of the carpenters.

"Thir," said Mugford, who suffered from a lisp.

"Take this bill down to Wilks, the printer, and tell him to put Badger's name in the largest type he has."

"Very good, 'Thir."

"Stay. Have you finished those skulls yet—Yorick's and the other two?"

"Yeth, Mithter Jobthson, 'Thir. I've got three big thwede turnipth, and I've covered 'em over with brown paper, and I think they'll do, 'Thir."

"Very well."

Exit Mugford, and enter Ikey.

"Now, Ikey! what do you want?"

"Please, Sir, we can't get no earth for Hamlick's grave, so you'll have to do with a bag o' silver sand; and please, Sir, the rehearsal bell's a-ringing."

"That'll do. Now, Sir, follow me, if you please," and the manager led the way on to the stage.

"Ah, Mr. Badger, allow me to introduce you to this gentleman—Mr. Badger, Mr. Robinson. Proud to make two eminent men acquainted with each other. Mr. Badger, Sir," said Jobson, turning to me—"Mr. Badger is a young man brimming over with talent—genius, Sir, positive genius. All fire, Sir—all fire."

Perhaps his having been all fire accounted for his scarcity of flesh. He was an overgrown, shambling lad of about twenty, with a cast in one eye, a snub nose, red hair, a wide mouth, and an unpleasant smile.

"'Ope I see you well, Sir," said Badger, grinning sheepishly, and sliding a damp paw into my hand.

"Well, Mr. Badger, I suppose you're going to astonish us all down here."

"I 'ope so, Sir."

"I hope so too," I rejoined.

"Ah, Mumbles, how are we getting on—eh?" asked Jobson, addressing his stage manager—an old utility man from the "Southwark"—who was cast for Polonius.

"Excellent well, i' faith, Mr. Jobson, excellent well! But I would that the players were more perfect in their parts; they throw me out most consumedly."

"Ah, you'll get used to that."

"True, Mr. Jobson, true. And even if they should be somewhat imperfect, methinks the worthy burgesses of Slushington are not well read enough to notice it."

Mumbles was so used to stage-talk, that he always spoke in this grandiose manner.

"Now, then, clear the stage for the rehearsal!" said Jobson. "Where are you all?—King! Queen! Hamlet! Polonius! Rosencrantz! Guildenstern! Horatius! Marcellus! Bernardo!"

"Here!" "Here!" "Here! Mr. Jobson."

"Tompkins! run up to the flies with some nails and the glue-pot, and tinker up that castle-wall a bit; and Ikey! pull up that sky border, and let the moon down two or three feet lower. Hi! what's that smoke? What are you burning in that moon—eh?"

"Paraffin, Sir."

"Put it out, put it out directly! I won't have a paraffin moon. I won't have a drop of paraffin in the place. Burn colza; if you can't get that, use candle-ends."

"Right, Sir."

"Mr. Dawbs, Mr. Dawbs; where is Mr. Dawbs?"

"Here, Sir."

"What's the meaning of all those holes in that horizon-cloth—eh?"

"They're stars, Sir."

"Stars, Sir! stars! Why, some of your stars are bigger than the moon; they're not stars, they're comets! meteors, sir! meteors! Cover 'em over directly."

"Certainly, Sir," said the crestfallen Dawbs; and the rehearsal commenced.

In the opening scene I heard fragments being given thus:—

King. Though yet of a— Hamlet, our dear brother's death

The mem'ry be ger-reen; and that is befitted
To bear our a— hearts in ger-rrief, and our whole Kingdom

To be contracted by one ber-row of woe, &c.

Queen (with a strong Scotch accent). Gude

Hamlet, cast thee neeghted coolour off,
An' let theen 'ee look like a friend on Dinmork;
Do not for eever wi' thee vailed lids
Seek for thee nooble feyther in the doost.

Thee knawest 'tis coommon, a' that leeves must dee,
Passin' thraw nature to eternitee.

Wha' seem ye then to fret aboot 'un, mon?"

Hamlet (jerkily). Seems, madam. Nay, *hit his*.
Hi know not seems.

It ain't alone my *hinky* cloke, good mother,
Nor customary suits of *sollum* black,
Nor windy perspiration, nor forced breath;
But *Hi* 'ave that within which passeth show.
These 'ere the trappings, *hand* the suits o' woe.

"Green!" interrupted Jobson, "see that those two egg-boxes for the throne steps are painted red before we rehearse again; and haven't we a better throne than that somewhere?"

"Niver a one, Sur, as is only a Windsor chair as we've borrowed from the 'Checquers'; but with a thrifle o' wood an' canvas, I ken rig up a high back to it, so as to make it look dacent loike."

"Do so, by all means."

And having seen as much of the rehearsal

as I wanted, I bade Jobson "Good morning," and left the theatre.

Monday evening arrived in due course, and the Theatre Royal, Slushington, was crowded. Badger was much applauded on his appearance; but, as soon as he found himself before the audience, his voice became totally inaudible. At length, a gentleman in the gallery shouted, "Speak up, undertaker!" which had the effect of increasing his nervousness to such an extent, that Hamlet's part in the Ghost scene became merely a piece of dumb show; during which the grumblings of the "gods," at first "not loud but deep," ripened into an angry roar, and culminated in a clamour for "Hot Codlings," or "Tipetywitchet," intermingled with cries of "Go home!" and "Bravo Shakspeare." Badger, however—who, it soon became evident, had had recourse to a stimulant—plodded on somewhat after this fashion:—

Hamlet. 'Tis now the very witchin' hour *hof* night,
When churchyards yawn, and 'ell himself breathes out
Contagion to this world. Now—now—

Prompter (at wing). Now could I drink hot blood.

Hamlet. Now could I drink 'ot blood,
And do a bit o' business that the day
Would quake to look on.
Oh 'art, lose not thy nature, let not *never*
The soul o' Nero henter this firm bosom, &c.

It was pleasant, also, to hear the scene between the Queen and Hamlet given thus:—

Queen. This is the vary coonage o' yer brain.
This boodlice creation, cextasy,
Is vary cooning in.

Hamlet. Hextasy!
My pulse, as yours, doth temp'rately keep time,
Hand makes as 'ealthful music, &c.

In the churchyard scene, Badger made a great but unexpected hit. In declaiming the famous speech—

What is he whose grief bears such an hemphasis?
Whose phase of sorrow
Conjures the wondering stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded 'earers. This *his* *Hi!*
'Amlet, the Dane.—

he kept backing step by step, until—forgetting its proximity—he missed his footing, and turned a back-somersault into Ophelia's grave, burying himself so effectually that the two gravediggers had to extricate him from the living tomb, amid roars of laughter from the audience. In this mishap he also lost his black wig, and played the remainder of the tragedy in his own red hair.

But the climax was reached in the last scene; when, having killed Laertes, Hamlet

wrests the poisoned cup from the attendant's hand. In flinging it away, it hit the dead Laertes on the nose; whereupon, that gentleman—who was of a fiery temperament—sprang up, and, striding to Hamlet, asked "Whether he did that on purpose? as, if so, he felt inclined to give him something for himself." Here the other performers interfered; and Laertes having been coaxed to die again peacefully, the tragedy was suffered to proceed. The curtain had barely fallen on "Hamlet," before some half-score scene-shifters and carpenters, headed by Green, came running on to the stage. After a short pause, Green—who was an Irishman—pulled off his cap, and, making a low bow, said:—

"Plase, yer honours, axing yer honours' pardon—I should be after saying, Ladies and Gintlemen—the manager—Bad 'cess to him—has been and gone and bouted with the resates, and he's forgotten to pay us our wages. Sure an' its hard loines for me mates an' me, as has got twelve small children—mostly under the age o' four—to pervide for, to be done out of our airmings in this way by a thafe as he is. Och! bad luck to ould Jobson; as I'd be after wishin' him to his face if he was here now. And, plase yer honours, I'm half ashamed to axe ye; but one o' the bhoys will stand by the door with the cap, and if so be as ye've got a few coppers to spare, we shall all feel very grateful to ye." Here the speaker was answered by a smart shower of small coin on the stage. "Hooray! for yer honours' ginerous hearts. Good luck to ye, and may ye live for iver, and die at a grane old age. Kape up the supply, gintlemen, and don't be afraid as we shall complain o' the throuble o' pickin' 'em up. May the blissins o' the missis and the young 'uns be upon ye, and thank ye for me; and may ye never be after knowin' what it is to feel the wants of a penny."

And this was the finish of Badger's *début*.

TABLE TALK.

NOBODY CAN REGARD THE FINE gray stone buildings of Christ's Hospital without admiration for the charity and goodness of the royal founder. And, probably, few persons in the hurrying crowd, who catch a glimpse of the Bluecoat boys in their antique and incommodious garb, look upon them, through the iron palisades that

separate their playground from the street, without a certain amount of interest. The school is said to owe its origin to the zeal awakened by a sermon of good Bishop Ridley in the breast of the young king. The Bishop "made a fruitful and goodly exhortation to the rich to be merciful unto the poor, and also to move such as were in authority, to travail by some charitable ways and means to comfort and relieve them." In November, 1552, three hundred and forty "poore fatherless children" were admitted to the school. Stow says:—"On Christmas Day, while the Lord Maior and Aldermen rode to Paul's, the children of Christ's Hospitall stood from St. Lawrence-lane end in Cheape towards Paul's, all in one livery of russet cotton, three hundred and forty in number; and at Easter next they were in blue at the Spittle, and so have continued ever since." The school was destroyed at the great fire of London, and was shortly afterwards rebuilt. The great dining hall only dates from the year 1825. Of the livery worn in the school, Mr. Timbs says:—"The dress of the Bluecoat boys is the costume of the citizens of London at the time of the foundation of the hospital, when blue coats were the common habit of the apprentices and serving-men, and yellow stockings were generally worn. This dress is the nearest approach to the monkish costume now worn: the dark blue coat, with a closely fitting body and loose sleeves, being the ancient tunic, and the under-coat, or 'yellow,' the sleeveless under-tunic of the monastery. The red leathern girdle corresponds to the hempen cord of the friar. Yellow worsted stockings, a flat, black woollen cap (scarcely larger than a saucer), and a clerical neckband complete the dress."

HOW FAR THE GOVERNORS act wisely and mercifully in forcing upon the youth of the nineteenth century the obsolete habit of the sixteenth is, we think, not a very debatable question. Besides making the poor boys into so many petticoated guys, the long skirts of their coats are a constant hindrance and standing impediment to their indulging in those athletic exercises common to their age. And we know no more pitiable object than a Bluecoat boy, on a hot July day, sweating under the load of his blue and yellow garments, and with his unhappy cranium ruthlessly exposed to the fierce

rays of the summer sun. In continuing to provide the boys with this livery there is neither sense nor reason. A regard for the designs and wishes of the founder, a love for maintaining the ancient custom of the school, or an impression that a "charity" boy should wear a distinctive habit, are none of them, singly or collectively, strong reasons enough for making fourteen or fifteen hundred boys miserably uncomfortable. We may live to see the Bluecoat boy habited like his "even Christian" at other public schools. But it is not only his dress that requires amendment. The school ought to be removed without unreasonable delay into the country, that the boys may have fresh air and plenty of space. We make an extract from a letter by an old Bluecoat boy, which appeared a day or two ago in the columns of a contemporary:—

"'Depressed vitality' is one of the effects which the report truly attributes to the action in young children of town air and cramped playgrounds. Almost all games involving much muscular exertion are prohibited; some because the nature of the ground renders them dangerous, others because they would tear the boys' long skirts out of their gathers. Balls are prohibited, because it is impossible to throw one without imminent risk of breaking several windows."

Consider for one moment the utter absurdity of boys with a playground they must not play in, and a dress that would not let them do it if they might! Think of football prohibited at Harrow, and cricket and boating at Eton! And if they were, the boys at those schools would still enjoy an advantage over the Christ's Hospital boys, in having fresh air and green fields, and a comfortable dress. We venture to hope—what recent events do not lead us to expect—that the next time the Royal President and Governors consider the matter of removal they will consent to it.

WE GLADLY COMPLY with the request of the Hon. Secretary of the Silk Supply Association by giving publicity to the wants of the association in the matter of food for their silkworms:—

"It being of much importance to obtain early regular supplies of proper food for the worms, the association would be obliged to gentlemen having mulberry trees who will occasionally favour them with small quantities of leaves."

The object of the association is to stimulate the production of silk in our colonies. This is a most useful and important in-

dustry, and might be turned to great account by our colonists settled in favourable climates. The secretary's letter says:—

"The association being possessed of some very rare and valuable eggs, or 'grain,' imported by the Hon. Secretary from Siberia, Mantchouria, Szechuen, Shang-tung, and other places where there exists no disease, will be enabled to demonstrate, for the information of sericulturists in this country and in the colonies, the simple practicability of silk production."

The authorities at South Kensington have placed a suitable room at the disposal of the association, and to this place the mulberry leaves may be sent.

M. VILLEMMAIN IS DEAD. The venerable secretary of the French Academy had reached the good old age of seventy-nine. He was appointed a professor at the Charlemagne College at the early age of nineteen. Other offices followed; but he lost the Imperial favour by refusing to undertake the preparation of a revised edition of the Classics, from which all passages unfavourable to Imperial rule should be omitted. M. Villemmain indignantly refused to put his name on the title-page, or otherwise assist in the publication of a maimed, expurgated Cicero.

WHAT M. VILLEMMAIN REFUSED to do to the writings of Cicero, an Englishwoman is prepared to undertake with regard to the Bible. We are at length offered—what we have long expected—a Bowdlerized version of Holy Writ. The following advertisement has appeared more than once in the columns of a contemporary:—

"BIBLE FOR CHILDREN.—A lady has prepared a Bible for Children, omitting all such passages and words as would naturally be avoided in reading the Bible with children, but leaving the context intact. The probable expense of bringing out a Bible in this form being very considerable, she earnestly begs all who sympathize with her in the wish to have such a Bible to put into their children's hands to send their names to C. B., Post-office, —, that she may have some idea of the support which the book is likely to meet with."

We must say we strongly hope that she will meet with no support at all. It is an English mother's duty—generally, too, her greatest pleasure—to gather her children round her knees, and there fill their minds with the matchless narratives of Jacob, and Samuel, and David. Many a man has been able to trace the noble stableness in good of his character to such teachings—never lost, never forgotten. May the day be far

distant when they shall be superseded by a Bowdlerized Bible, expurgated and pruned by the hand of the spoiler.

A CORRESPONDENT: In a recent number of ONCE A WEEK, *apropos* of several errors which had crept into the pages of contemporaries, a remark was made that "it would take the eyes of Argus and the arms of Briareus to keep everybody straight." This remark has since received two more illustrations, one of which came to light on the 29th April, and the other on the following day. The *Echo* of the former date contained the following paragraph:—

"A veteran named William Dibbs, lately resident in Hodgson-street, Sheffield, died on Tuesday, aged 82. He fought by the side of Lord Nelson in the battles of Trafalgar and Navarino, in which he received some serious wounds."

As Nelson fell at Trafalgar in 1805, a "veteran" who "*fought by his side*" at Navarino in 1827 must have been a very wonderful "veteran" indeed. Again, in the *Illustrated London News*, of the 30th ult., the readers of that respectable publication were presented with a likeness purporting to be that of the Right Rev. Joshua Hughes, D.D., the new Bishop of St. Asaph, which was, in fact, the portrait, not of the right rev. prelate, but of a respected Denbighshire clergyman.

A MEMBER of a yeomanry cavalry regiment was asked if he had ever been called out on active duty. To which he replied, "I'm 'appy to say, sir, never but once; and then I got enough to last me some time. The pitmen was a rioting in the Black Country, and we was called out. It was the edge of night; but the sky wasn't lighted up as usual, because most of the fires were out, the men being on strike. Well, we had to be ready to jump into the saddle at the word of command. There were our 'osses, and there were we, a-standing by our 'osses' 'eads. This went on for two mortal hours; when up rides the colonel, and my heart went up into my mouth in a minute. 'My lads,' says the colonel, 'we aint wanted, and you may all go home again.' So home we went, and precious glad we was, I can assure you, sir. That was the only time I was ever on active duty, and I hope it'll be the last."

The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.



Once a Week.]

[June, 1870.

"THE FERN GATHERER."—DRAWN BY S. F. HEWETT.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 127.

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Price 2d.

THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES;
OR,
MEMOIRS OF A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY.
BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

CHAPTER XX.



GREAT dinner was given in the large baronial hall. It was the evening before the marriage. The house was full to overflowing. Long, long tables, crowded on both sides with all the

gentility in the county—and, indeed, in the country. The Duke wore his stars and blue riband—round his leg, across his chest—and sat on his throne, and looked quite king-like. Mr. Hoxter had found his way there, as well as others who had figured in that first party with which this little history opened. Some of the more diplomatic gentry wondered exceedingly why the Duke was so eager for this alliance; but it was explained—in the smoking-room—that Benbow was henceforward “to find brains for the firm.” Whatever was the reason, there were good motives; as the Duke, though slow and rather heavy, was “long-headed” enough when his family interest was concerned.

It was a great festival; and the young man seemed to himself to be walking in a dream. Such attention was paid to him—such glory seemed to encircle his head, *nimbus*-like. It was as though he had performed some public achievement of great value, by which he had laid the public under a compliment. Indeed, men on the eve of marriage often assume this complacent air, and bear themselves as though they had done service—won a peerage, or carried a fortress. The lights played upon Charles. He was supremely happy. But his was not a tithe of the happiness of his father. It certainly was—if the thought ever occurred to him to weigh and balance such things—the happiest night of his life. The eve, too, of such a day! Never had success been more sweet. Never had he been so affectionate to his dear son.

“My own Charles! If you only knew what I feel! I own myself inferior to you in everything. I cannot say how I admire you. You have made a gallant struggle, and shown yourself a true man beyond your years. God bless you for it! You have made me a happy man to-night.”

The son, that night in his room, thinking over so many things, was not disturbed by any dreams of the past. He wondered how strangely to his advantage everything had turned out. What a dreadful complication it *might* have proved. That rash act—for such it was—what a terrible struggle it might have involved him in with his father—and, indeed, the world! Starvation would, perhaps, have been the worst evil. Poor Lydia! Vows—devotion—promises—the solemn undertaking at the altar, in the lonely church—where were these now?

At last, here was the morning!—bright, gay, sunny! Magnificent carriages were hurrying up. The whole place was in a flutter. It seemed to glitter all over with white roses and decorations. The sunlight

poured in upon the scene, bathing the grand Castle in floods of gorgeous light. The whole country for miles about was thrown into a flutter of excitement at the marriage—the Ducal marriage. The bride looked really handsome, and had colour and brilliancy. Mr. Benbow himself, instead of being a machine—a mechanical sort of engine—for that day only was human, soft, unmetallic—allowed his blood to flow and circulate, like that of other men. This was the grandest *coup* of his life. Though the lady had “no money”—but this was not asked for—he estimated her fortune as equal, in money value, to some thirty thousand pounds.

For years he had not felt so happy—so full of kindness and soft goodwill to all men; and a casual clergyman applicant for a subscription to the Orphans’ Home was amazed at receiving the next day a sum of twenty pounds.

It wanted but an hour to the ceremony, and the Lord Bishop of St. Arthur’s, the Hon. and Rev. Charles Bridles, D.D.—who was to be “assisted,” propped round about like a falling tree, by three other clergymen—was to do that sacred office. That dignity was just getting ready to robe, the bridesmaids—a whole battalion of “Lady Charlottes” and “Hon. Evas”—were being equipped and marshalled—when the father and son withdrew together into the study for a few last words. First, Mr. Benbow—his arm affectionately round his son—laid down on the table a sum of one hundred pounds in circular notes, and placed on the top of them a cheque for four hundred.

“That will carry you over a couple of months’ tour. Write to me, my dear boy, if you want more. Spare nothing. Do all magnificently. Everything depends on first impressions. Ah, I am so grieved, now that it has come to the point, to lose you! No matter, we shall all be very happy now. And, my dear, dear boy, the only thing that consoles me, and should console you, is, that you would have been very wretched otherwise. You could not have endured a life of privation. Your fine spirit would have soon awakened to the change in your position. I know you better than you know yourself, my dearest Charles; and, believe me, it has been all for the best.”

“I begin to think so, father, and I am sure of it. And you will do me this justice,

dear father—I behaved all through like a man of honour, like a gentleman.”

“Nobly, my dear boy—nobly! I own that, and always did. Even when displeased with you, I admitted that I was secretly proud of you.”

A curious look came into the young man’s face—half of pride, half of shame.

“At this moment, dear father, I should have no concealments from you—now that you will give me your blessing. It would be a reproach to myself if I did not tell you all. As I am leaving you now, to begin a new life, it is only right that I should have nothing concealed from the dear father who has been so good to me.”

At this moment entered the Duke, hurriedly.

“Now, my dear Charles, we are getting ready. The Bishop is robing, and the bridesmaids are dressed, and going off to the chapel. Everybody has come.”

With a sort of relief the young man said—

“I am quite ready. Let us go, father.”

“Just one moment, Duke. We shall follow in a second. Tell me, Charles, what do you mean by concealment?”

“Well, it is no matter now, so I may as well tell you,” the young man said, hurriedly, and putting on his gloves. “That poor saint Lydia, before she went away—that time you followed us—”

“Yes,” said his father, uneasily—“Well, she went away, and—she died.”

“Exactly. But I never told you before; I thought it no use—it would only worry you! But—but—”

“But what? What is coming? Speak out, will you!” said his father, roughly.

“Well—I was—*married to her!*”

“*Married to her!*” almost shrieked his father, falling back some steps. “Married! What d’ye mean? You didn’t dare to do that!”

Alarmed, the son looked at him strangely.

“It is all over now,” he faltered. “It was foolish, I know.”

“O ruin—ruin! Good God!”

Enters now the Duke.

“They are ready. The Bishop is in the chapel. Why, what’s the matter, Benbow? My dear friend, it isn’t like a mother and daughter—you musn’t take it to heart!”

Mr. Benbow almost gasped—“I’ll follow you in a moment. Leave me alone for a short time—for two minutes—and then I shall know *what to do.*”

The Duke was too excited to import any meaning into the words. He took the young man's arm, and led him away—to be married!

CHAPTER XXI.

IMAGINE that man—that diplomatist, plotter, schemer, what not—in such a situation! Only conceive the agitated council held within himself during those few most precious—he had but a few—seconds within which to make up his mind. It was as though an executioner was standing over him with a drawn sword at his neck, calling on him to decide within a few minutes. Heavens! What *was* he to do? Every second was hurrying him to destruction, whatever way he looked at it. There he was, on the edge of a precipice—with difficulty balanced! The slightest movement either way, and he tottered over. O, heavens! what was he to do? O, there could be no hesitation, he thought, as he staggered to his feet. It was a question of *crime*. Even now he might be too late. He rushed to the door. He met one of the young men, gay and brilliant, decked out in favours and lightest festive dress. It gave him a chill. The young man started back as he saw him.

“Good heavens! Mr. Benbow, you are ill! Come, sir, you must not take this to heart. It is the best thing that has happened to Charles in all his life. They are all at the altar.”

“All in good time,” he said, desperately, and hurried along.

Here was the chapel—a little private and domestic one, established in the Castle—just off the great hall. A small archway opened into it, and through this was seen the view of the brilliant little interior, crammed and crowded with rank and gentility. There stood the Duke, starred and gartered, the bishop and clergy, the ladies with white snowy bonnets and white laces, military friends in uniform—the bride herself, looking distinguished if not handsome. There was the bridegroom, happy and excited. There was the great hall outside crowded with neighbours and retainers, all struggling to get a view through the arch; and here was Mr. Benbow—unhappy father!—tottering along to forbid this ceremony. Yet, what could he do? How in face of all these?—Oh! the shame, the disgrace, the misery. Suddenly, just as he entered

the hall, came an inspiration, a spar to catch at, and he clutched it. It came back on him that he read in the American papers *first* that she was ill. Who knows now what might have turned out? She might be dead at that moment. God grant it! And then how foolish, how profitless, his protest and interference. Oh, what a plank! He lifted himself on it. He dared not speak in any case. He would do as he had so often done before, let chance—that wonderful *aide-de-camp*—come to help him.

So it began. The Lord Bishop impressively read, and was duly “assisted” by his supporters; the village girls chanted; and the bride and bridegroom answered to the solemn questions put to them. In short, they were married. And it was now “Mr. Charles and Lady Rosa Benbow:” so an old gentleman said to the unhappy father—who, everyone remarked, “felt it so much.”

“Yes, I suppose so,” answered Mr. Benbow, vacantly. “To be sure they are,” he added, heartily.

There they were, going through the tedious and elaborate forms—signing, witnessing, &c. Everyone was smiling and chatting, and everyone smiled and chattered as they did on no former occasion. People came up to the bride, their faces composed to a simper such as they kept for no other occasion.

But still Mr. Benbow looked on vacantly, his eyes glancing from one face to the other. Everyone was remarking him. Where was his diplomacy—his planning? On such an occasion the day ought to have been a most precious one, worth thousands in the way of laying foundation stones for acquaintanceship and connection with the great: on which “courses” he would have reared great towers and castles, which nothing could have blown down. There were wonderful persons there—valuable to a degree; yet there he was, idle and in a stupor. Some said it was ludicrous, a man like Benbow affecting the disconsolate father; though the more charitable set him down as ill—which, indeed, he said later that he was, and went to his room. He was glad of that relief. The faces about him pressed on him, and prevented his thinking. Oh! he longed to think—to strive and realize the immeasurable horror of the situation. The change, too—the frightful change—from only that morning. He dashing him down headlong, till he had become a poor, miserable, bruised

wretch, far below even the poorest private individual in all that company, and whom he despised as not having the wits and arts to get on in life. He was a *criminal*—or, if not, his family was on the verge of *disgrace*, of being in the papers; of being talked about, pointed at. He could not endure it.

Still, the other thought came back on him. After all, something desperate might be done in so desperate a case. Something must be done. After all there was hope left, and chance. With all his cleverness, surely, he could deal with such a case as this.

As he thought, and thought, and thought with a painful intensity, he began to see the desperate necessity of *doing something*. And he began to see, also, that there was some faint prospect of success. Oh, but still, what a change! What a difference from the morning; with what different arms could he work and fight! Alas! he could then attack—assail the whole world; now he must be miserably on the defensive.

"Won't you come down?" said the same young man who had been sent to look for him. "They are all at the breakfast. Even if you are unwell, the Duke says, it will look so strange if you are away during the speeches and all that."

"Ah, to be sure," said Mr. Benbow, rousing himself. "Of course. I have not been at all well all the day. I am going now. What a brilliant morning we have had of it—quite a red-letter day."

And he took the arm of the young man. But, as he quitted the room, there swung and waved over his head, suspended by a fine hair, that fatal SWORD OF DAMOCLES—sharp Damascene, fine edged. From that day forth it was always to attend him—always to swing, pendulum-like, over his head. Always were his eyes to be glancing up at it uneasily; for the hair was very fine, and, by the friction, was certain to wear itself away. Some have familiars; some have a Mephistopheles; but there can be conceived no more terrible lot than to have to go through life with such a glittering weapon suspended over their heads.

CHAPTER XXII.

HERE was the grand banqueting room—the long table lined with bright faces and figures—that specially sunshiny, bright air settling over all which peculiarly

belongs to a wedding day. Thus, a sort of even feigned hilarity is *de rigueur*—people, even of a gloomy sort, must *act* festivity. There was a general chatter, and unbounded happiness. Then came the speeches. The Duke, in a regular oration; the Marquis St. Upas, Right Hon. Mr. Hoxter, the Lord Bishop, and the young Earl of Mount-rivet returning thanks in a sprightly way for the ladies. There was the usual routine—the cutting the cake; the breaking up; the bride going away to dress; the entering the carriage, drawn up at the door. All this time Mr. Benbow could not shake off his gloom. He kept his head down, in a shrinking fashion, as though that fatal Sword was going to fall on him at any moment and cleave his skull.

Everyone was still remarking how strange it was that a man "like Benbow"—a true worldling—should show such really genuine affection—such regret at the loss of his son.

Now they were all in the hall; now the stairs were crowded and the steps outside. "The happy pair" were coming down. Young Lord Mount-rivet and Mr. Hoxter were furnished with a supply of old shoes, with which they kept in ambuscade till the fitting moment. Out they came. Mr. Charles and Lady Rosa Benbow, resplendent and bright, with the world before them. Charles, with his head full of the new and dazzling schemes his father had opened out before him, came and wrung his hand:—

"Good and kind father, I shall never forget all that I owe to you. I now see your wisdom; and how you have contrived everything for the best."

"Don't, don't!" said Mr. Benbow, in an agony almost. "Leave it so. God bless you. You owe nothing to me, indeed. But you have done no harm, and should not be held accountable for any of *my* work."

This sounded very strange to the young man. It seemed stranger to the new Lady Rosa Benbow, from whom her father-in-law turned away his eyes. As she came up to him, he saw the Sword, high in the air, glittering and shining over his head. He shrank away from it.

Then the door had shut with a bang; the servant had slipped up behind; the postillions had plunged forward; the gravel was scattered; the chariot danced and swung; and away they were whirled into the world—that new world—which had opened for both.

That little play was over: the scene-shifters came to clear away. The stage would, of course, be wanting for other parties. But this was the grand result of Mr. Benbow's scheming—the suspension of a Sword of Damocles over his own head.

Now that he was done with the pressure of the actual paraphernalia, and the actors, it was something. He could breathe more freely, and could think without distraction.

What was he to do? That was the first question. Action of some sort would have to be taken. Things could not remain as they were; nor could he endure the torture of passively and patiently expecting what was to happen, and how the blow was to fall. The first thing was to know what must happen—to have *information*, to know the facts—*was she alive?* And she was, of this he was certain: if there was no other reason but the devilish contrariety of things, which always makes the probabilities be certainly in favour of what is fatal and dangerous, rather than what is favourable. Yes; she was alive!

Then, on *that* basis, what was to be the next step? Treat with her? No. She might never hear it. He could keep it out of the papers. But still, she had announced that within a certain period she would return. There was a vindictiveness about her that seemed inexplicable, and which he could not deal with on pecuniary terms. She was beyond a bribe. There could be no buying her over. Then some plan of operation must be laid out—something to get information.

So the fatal day, which revolutionized his whole life, came to a close. His great plan had succeeded; but after what a fashion!

THE STORY OF A WINDOW.

WHEN the renown of the beautiful chapel, which Henry the Seventh, King of England, was building at Westminster, in honour of the Blessed Mary, had spread over the Catholic world, the magistrates of Dort, anxious to contribute to the adornment of the famous edifice, proposed to present a painted window to the King. And so it came to pass that I was made in the old, water-choked Dutch city; and my completion cost the artist five years of arduous and anxious labour. The good burghers of Dort procured from England the portraits of Henry and his queen, Eliza-

beth, in order that they might be reproduced in me; but, before I could be shipped to my destination, the king died, and a space was not allotted to me where one of the *tres magi* of that age rests with his consort.

I then fell into the hands of an abbot of Waltham, in Essex, the burial-place of Harold, the last of the Saxon kings. This king had founded the abbey; and he offered here his prayers and vows for victory previous to his engagement with the Norman Conqueror. His picture was in the north window of the Church of the Holy Cross. My antique companion, though remaining longer at Waltham, was more unfortunate than I was. The civil war, which was terminated by Henry the Seventh taking the Princess Elizabeth to wife and consort, was, after the lapse of more than a century, to be followed by one which caused not only the abolition of monarchy—an institution which, happily, could be revived—but the demolition of works of art which could never be replaced. My companion, then, in the year 1645, fell a victim to the fanaticism of men, who beat it down under the notion that it was an emblem of superstition. No less than eight hundred of these beautiful windows were similarly destroyed at this time.

To return to my own history. I was placed in the abbey, which had been enriched by Maud, the queen of Henry the First, who went every day in Lent to the church, her feet and her legs bare, and wearing a garment of hair; and then she would wash and kiss the feet of the poorest people, and distribute alms. Adelsia, the second wife of Henry the First, also gave up the tithes of her demesnes to the canons of Waltham; and King Stephen confirmed the privileges granted by his predecessor. It seems, however, that, with all this prosperity, the dean and eleven canons behaved very badly; and so afforded Henry the Second an excuse for superseding them, and placing an abbot and twenty-four regular Augustinians in their room. These good men are reported to have slept upon mattresses, and to have had blankets of wool; but they fasted much, and were silent, and kept their cloisters. This tranquillity did not last; for the monks engaged in broils with the townsmen about the commons. The men of Waltham drowned the abbot's mares and colts, and complained to the

king that the reverend gentleman would "eat the townspeople to the bones." The abbot, having ultimately gained the victory, began a dispute with a lord of the manor and the men of Cheshunt. But, whilst the monks quarrelled with the men, it is reported by their enemies that, during my stay at Waltham, they were on good terms with the women—especially with the holy sisters of Cheshunt nunnery. One Sir Henry Colt, of Nether Hall, who often amused Bluff King Hal by his "merry conceits," quitted the court at a late hour one night in order to play a practical joke upon the reverend brethren of Waltham, as he imagined that they had been regaling themselves with the lively sisters of Cheshunt nunnery, and would return in the small hours to their own cloisters. Now, Sir Henry had a buckstall, with which he had been in the habit of taking deer in the forest; and he pitched this in the narrowest place in the marsh, where the monks would be certain to pass on their way home; and he left his men to manage the snare. Presently, as he had suspected, the monks came out of the nunnery, accompanied by some of the sisterhood, who appeared loath to leave such good company. Sir Henry, who had come behind them, made a startling noise. The brethren put out their light, and trusted to their knowledge of the oft-trodden path; but they all ran, with the ladies, into the trap of the wily knight, who next morning presented his prey at court, when the king remarked that he had often seen sweeter venison, but never any more beautiful or fat.

Many stories are told of the diversions of Henry the Eighth; but tradition gives one which I must repeat to show that my masters were more than once the victims of this monarch's fun.

The king was one day hunting in the forest, when, his appetite being sharpened by the exercise of the chase, he presented himself at the abbey at about dinner time, disguised as one of his own guards, and was invited to the hospitable table of our Superior, whom he astonished by the heartiness with which he demolished slice after slice of a magnificent sirloin of beef. Our abbot told his guest that he would give one hundred pounds if he could feed on beef with a similar relish; and he added that his weak stomach would hardly digest a small piece of rabbit, or the wing of a chicken. The guest pledged his host, thanked him for

good cheer, and departed. Some time after this occurrence, the worthy abbot was waited upon by a pursuivant, who politely took him up to the Tower of London, where he was kept a prisoner, and fed, for a short period, on bread and water. Meanwhile, the poor old man vainly racked his brains to find a reason for his incurring his sovereign's displeasure. A day at length came when a sirloin of beef was set before him, to which the hungry divine did ample justice. The king, who had been a concealed spectator of the abbot's enjoyment, then presented himself to his prisoner, and demanded the fee of a hundred pounds, as the physician who had restored his failing appetite; and, upon our coffers being lightened of this good sum, our lord abbot was released, and returned to resume his sway over his table.

But my dwelling-place was marked out for ruin, although Robert Fuller, the last abbot, hoping to save his house from dissolution, had transferred to the rapacious sovereign the beautiful seat of Copt Hall. The king, however, seized the old abbey where he had been so often welcomed, and where the bells had been rung at his coming, the ringers being paid sixpence. The lord abbot, who was also Prior Commendatory of St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, surrendered, with seventeen of his canons, to the king's visitors, on the 23rd of March, 1540; and, by calling himself Sir Robert Fuller, contented himself with the title of the humblest priest of the day. The old man could not long survive his fall; he died in less than six months from the time of his surrender, bequeathing ten pounds and a chalice, silver and gilt, to Waltham Church. This chalice was afterwards sold, together with the priests' vestments and the bells; and the king bestowed our home upon Sir Anthony Denny, one of the gentlemen of his bedchamber.

A short time before quitting the abbey, my master, Sir Robert Fuller, caused me to be removed for safety to New Hall, a house in Essex, which had been adorned and improved by the king, who had obtained it by exchange from Thomas Boleyn, Earl of Wiltshire, the father of the unfortunate Queen Anne. Henry had been so charmed with the situation of the place that he erected it into an honour, and gave it the name of Beaulieu. He kept the feast of St. George here in 1524. But it had a dismal and horrible association; for on the morning of the queen's execution, Henry

was prepared for the chase near the house, but waited to hear the signal gun which should announce that the hapless lady was no more; and, when the report was borne faintly through the morning air, the heartless tyrant is said to have exclaimed, "Away, unkennel the hounds!" and to have gone on his expedition with no thought but that of joy in the cruel death of one to whom he had given a coronet and then a throne, only to lead to her destruction.

The Princess Mary lived at New Hall for several years; and, in 1573, Queen Elizabeth granted the estate, with other contiguous manors, to Thomas Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex, who had rendered good service to his country both in Scotland and Ireland. This nobleman, dying without issue, was succeeded by his brother, whose son and heir, Robert, Earl of Sussex, sold it about the year 1620 for thirty thousand pounds to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. The character of Villiers, upon which so many imputations were cast, would form no part of my story. It was from New Hall that he set out with Prince Charles, on the 13th February, 1623, to undertake a journey to Madrid, to carry on the suit of the prince for the hand of the Infanta of Spain. The travellers had disguised beards, and took the names of Thomas and John Smith; and, on ferrying over the river at Gravesend, excited the suspicion of the boatman by the liberality of their payment. They were detained by the Mayor of Canterbury, until Buckingham removed his false beard, and stated that he was "going covertly to take a secret view, being admiral, of the forwardness of his Majesty's fleet, which was then in preparation on the narrow seas."

When he was assassinated by John Felton, at Portsmouth, on 23rd August, 1628, I fell, with the estate, into the hands of his second son, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who, on the outbreak of the civil war, espoused the royal cause. Upon the defeat by Fairfax, at Kingston-upon-Thames, of the Earl of Holland, under whom Buckingham served, my new master escaped, and went abroad; and, when he did not comply with the request of the Parliament to return within forty days, his estates were confiscated.

In April, 1651, Oliver Cromwell purchased New Hall—the annual value of which was then computed at £1,309 12s. 3½d.—for

the sum of five shillings. The Protector retained possession only for a short period, for he gave New Hall and a sum of money in exchange for Hampton Court. The estate was next bought by three opulent merchants of London for £18,000; but, after the Restoration, it was recovered by the Duke of Buckingham, and then was purchased by George Monk, Duke of Albemarle.

Thanks to the indifference of all the owners of New Hall since my arrival, I lay hidden during the disastrous civil contentions which led to the execution of the unhappy Prince who once set out from the house, with his father's trusted friend, to pursue his career of pleasure on the Continent. If I had been discovered by the Puritans, assuredly I should have shared the destruction dealt so liberally to art treasures. But when my new master had brought his king triumphantly through London, and had ridden next before his Majesty in a splendid procession, amidst acclamations such as did not welcome even the lion-hearted monarch when he returned from his captivity, or Henry Tudor when he came to be crowned after putting an end to the other long civil war by his victory at Bosworth, he came to his home to live in great splendour; and, seeking me out, restored me to the light in the chapel at New Hall. Here I remained in peace, until the hardships suffered by the brave soldier in his early days, and the increasing weight of state affairs, did their work, and the old man who had rescued me from the darkness closed his eyes to this world, and entered into a happy immortality. The people mourned over the restorer of their peace; and the king, whom he had so faithfully served, gave his loyal dust a resting-place with the ashes of former sovereigns in that proud fane which I had been intended to grace.

His biographer writes:—"May the imperial crown of England never want anything to support it besides its own majesty and greatness; but, if ever it should, may there never be wanting a Duke of Albemarle. Amen." And I would express my hope that art in England may never require anything to foster it besides its own beauty and refining influence; but, if ever it should, may there never be wanting a statesman to render his aid, and bring hidden treasures to light, like the great and fortunate George Monk. Amen.

His son Christopher, Duke of Albemarle, died without issue; and New Hall, therefore, devolved to his duchess, who would not reside there, but allowed everything to fall to ruin and decay. The reversion was purchased of the heirs of this lady by Richard Hoare, Esq., a rich banker and Lord Mayor of London, who resold it to John Olmuis, Esq. I trembled for my fate when I heard that the chapel was to be demolished by Mr. Olmuis; but that gentleman preserved me from destruction in order that I might be sold for some church. So I lay hidden again for several years, and was cased up in boxes until one Mr. Conyers heard of me, and bought me for his chapel at Copt Hall, near Epping, and paid a celebrated artist—Mr. Price—a large sum for repairing me; thus I came to a building which had belonged to my old masters, the abbots of Waltham.

But I did not here find an abiding place. Mr. John Conyers, the son of the gentleman who last rescued me from obscurity, built a new house at some distance from the old seat. He had no further use for me, and he sold me to the committee appointed for repairing and beautifying the Church of St. Margaret, at Westminster; and in this building I have, after many dangers and almost miraculous escapes in the religious and political troubles of the country, found for many years a resting-place so near to the chapel for which the pious Dutchmen designed me.

I show St. George, the patron saint of England, conquering that "red dragon, the devil, who burneth with fury, and is red with the blood of the faithful;" and St. Catherine, the virgin martyr of Alexandria. I commemorate the termination of the terrible Wars of the Roses by the union of the houses of York and Lancaster in the persons of Henry the Seventh and his queen, Elizabeth. But my special mission here is to remind men of that scene at Jerusalem where the Saviour of the world hung upon the cross, surrounded by the Roman officers and soldiers and the chief rulers among the Jews, with Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and the fainting mother of our Lord, when the Roman centurion pierced the sacred side, from which issued blood and water. The soul of the penitent thief, in the form of a little child, is received by an angel for conveyance to that Paradise in which its

Saviour awaits it; and the soul of the reviling malefactor, on the other side, is transported by the Power of Darkness. This latter grotesqueness, characteristic of the age of my creation, has nearly caused my mutilation by a reverend zealot.

The ages when I should have been a leaf of the poor man's Bible have rolled away; and by the blessed influence of the art first exercised in England by William Caxton, whose work is recorded on a tablet in the sacred building where I now stand, the wonderful and awful story which is depicted in me can be read alike by the great and the lowly—by the legislators, who come from the opposite palace to worship here—and by the poor, who live in the crowded courts and alleys of the surrounding city. I have been in the possession of the powerful churchman, the favoured noble, the dissolute courtier, the Protector of the Commonwealth, the triumphant general, and the rich merchant. There have been those who—only recently—have agitated for the removal of my present dwelling, but who have not yet succeeded in their efforts to demolish the church for their so-called public improvements. I cannot conjecture what my fate would have been had the commercial speculators been permitted to destroy my home; but I rest confident of my ultimate safety, now that the time of Vandalism has passed; and I pray men to leave me to be a memorial of the Saviour's oblation of himself for the sins of the whole world.

MUSIC OF THE SEASON.

TO our readers in town and country alike we are willing to believe that a few notes about the new music of the season will be of interest. In town, probably, the months of May and June make the greatest demands upon the skill of fair executants; while in the country, at all seasons and times, music is a standing dish for which it would not be easy to find a substitute. In the first week in June, a few remarks from our pen upon some of the pieces sent us for review cannot be considered *mal-à-propos*. Without attempting an elaborate criticism, which our space will not allow, we may safely venture upon a sort of *catalogue raisonné*, in which are enumerated such songs and pieces as, in our judgment, possess merit, and are likely to become popular

with singers and pianists. From the music on our table, published by various firms, we will proceed to make a selection, beginning in alphabetical order with that sent us by Messrs. Boosey and Co., Holles-street.

Four pieces containing music from Offenbach's "Princess of Trebizonde" will be favourably received by all who have heard that piquant little opera at the Gaiety. "The Lawful Wife of Rustifum" is a capital song, which commonly meets with the encore it deserves at the theatre before mentioned. The chorus is very full of "go"—

"Rustifum! She was a wife and no mistake,
To all her duties wide awake,
Her morals none could ever shake;
She was a wife and no mistake."

There are also a quadrille by Arban and a valse by Charles Coote on airs from this opera; while Kuhe has written a brilliant fantasia for pianoforte solo upon the music of the "Princess of Trebizonde." All these are sure to become favourites, as the airs are full of melody, and there is something very light and graceful about the music generally.

We can commend two songs written by Arthur S. Sullivan for Madame Sherrington and Madame Trebelli-Bettini respectively. "The Village Chimes," the words of which are by Charles J. Rowe, is a very pleasing song, and well suited to the capacity of an ordinary contralto voice. The air is simple and flowing. "Stelluzza" is a brilliant arrangement of an "air Roumain" as a fantasia for pianoforte by the Chevalier Kontski, pianist to the King of Prussia.

"Household Music," No. 14, and the "Musical Cabinet," Nos. 139, 140, are, as usual, marvels of cheapness and excellence.

"The Amateur Organist," Brewer and Co., Bishopsgate-street, is a useful companion to the organ, by Edward Travis. It contains a large collection of voluntaries, most of which appear to be judiciously arranged. In every instance, there are full instructions as to the most suitable stops to be used.

Chappell and Co., New Bond-street, publish "Ireland," a grand fantasia on Irish melodies. It is presented in an appropriate emerald wrapper, and contains such old favourites as "The Last Rose of Summer" and "St. Patrick's Day," composed for and dedicated to Madame Goddard by Brinley Richards. "Ireland" is one of the most effective pianoforte pieces we have heard for some time, and it has the recommenda-

tion of being only moderately difficult. "Dora" is a pretty Irish ballad in the rich Southern brogue. The air is characteristic. "The Star's Message" is another song possessing considerable merit. The sentiment is touching, and the music suits the words very well, being plaintive and full of feeling. "Le Loup Garou" and "Souvenir de Faust," the last by Kontski, are two good pianoforte pieces. In the "Faust," the melodies of Gounod's opera are faithfully and admirably reproduced.

Hammond and Co., Vigo-street, Regent-street, send us some good dance music. "Berliner," a galop *brillante*; and "Fantasca," a quadrille by Hertel—composer of the famous "Flick and Flock" galop—are both dance tunes well adapted to the requirements of the ball-room.

"Am Schönen Rhein" is a set of pretty waltzes; and "Les Adieux," and two other sets of waltzes by Josef Gung'l, are especially deserving of praise. "We miss Thee at Home" is a favourite song we may dismiss without comment on this occasion.

Hopwood and Crew, New Bond-street, have a capital galop, by Charles Coote, jun., on the "Frou Frou" music. "Belle of the Ball," a valse by the same composer, is another dance tune likely to be heard frequently this season.

Lamborn Cock and Co., New Bond-street, publish some excellent songs by Ciro Pinsuti. "The Fairest Maiden led the Dance," "Love will shine all through," and "I heard a Voice," are three ballads by this composer. The words and music of "Love will shine all through" are especially good. The music is within the range of any contralto voice.

From the recently produced opera of Mozart, "L'Oca del Cairo," we have Fabrizio's air, "Al raggio fulgente," and Isabella's "Come il bacio dell' Aurora." These songs are both full of melody, and will be listened to with pleasure by all lovers of good music.

A transcription of Weber's "Abu Hassan," by Liebich, for pianoforte solo, makes an effective piece; while Dr. Arne's beautiful air, "Where the Bee Sucks," is lightly and delicately treated by Arthur O'Leary. Macfarren's "Gondola," a "romance," and Francesco Berger's "Dancing Blossoms," a "capriccio," are two compositions that appear to contain all the necessary elements of a good piece. They are melodious and

very pleasing to the ear; the original theme is well sustained in the variations upon it; and, without being difficult, they afford sufficient opportunity for display at the hands of an accomplished performer. We must not omit to mention a clever arrangement of the favourite airs in Mozart's "L'Oca del Cairo," by W. H. Callcott. These airs are arranged for pianoforte, either as solos or duets; and there are, likewise, accompaniments for flute, violin, and violoncello. Although "L'Oca del Cairo" is quite a trifle, it contains some good music, and is an opera which will always be held in some esteem, though it can hardly with fairness be called Mozart's.

From Metzler and Co., Great Marlborough-street, we have some of the Lyceum music. "Where shall I take my Bride?" Siebel's song from Hervé's "Little Faust," ought to be as popular off the stage as it is on it. "Breaking the Spell," a trifle of Offenbach's for three characters—"Old Matthew," "Peter Bloom," and "Jenny Wood"—is just as well suited to a drawing-room representation as it is to the stage. Amateurs in search of a pretty operetta should try "Breaking the Spell."

Let us also commend "The Friend we had at School," a ballad by J. T. Wrighton; and one of the best galops we have heard for some time, Frank Musgrave's "Bouffe Galop," on airs played at the Lyceum.

Novello, Ewer, and Co., are the publishers of "Rebekah," by J. Barnby. "Rebekah" is a sacred cantata in two scenes. The principal characters are Rebekah, Isaac, and Eliezer. The first scene is at the well, the second the meeting of Isaac and his bride. The libretto, which is very good, is from the pen of Mr. Arthur Matthison. The Bible story is rather freely treated, however. The music we did not admire when we heard it for the first time, a few nights ago, although the composer conducted his oratorio in person. "Rebekah" is not, in our opinion, equal to some of Mr. Barnby's less pretentious performances; the music is spoilt by the elaborate ornament which distinguishes the accompaniments. By themselves, some of the airs seem melodious enough; but the way in which they are harmonized destroys their effect when rendered by the orchestra.

"Loyal Death," for bass or baritone, and "Insufficiency," for tenor, are two good songs, composed by J. Stainer.

"Orphée aux Enfers," *fantasie brillante*, on the music of Offenbach's comic opera, arranged for the pianoforte by Oliver Cramer; and "La Zingarella," a *tarantella*, by Charles Gardner, are two good pianoforte pieces, published by G. R. Samson, Wells-street. The latter of these pieces is extremely simple.

J. Shepherd, Warwick-lane, Paternoster-row, publishes some useful music for beginners under the alliterative title of "Silvery Strains for Small Soloists." Our old friend, the "Ten Little Nigger Boys," appears in this series as "Ten Youthful Africans." These pieces are carefully fingered.

"Beautiful Windermere," the words by J. Carpenter, music by J. W. Cherry, and "Sunbeams," by the same composer, are two sentimental songs of average merit.

Weekes and Co. are the publishers of two very good pieces by Oliver Cramer—"Sweet Hills of Tyrol," a lively and inspiring waltz, with all the ring of the wild Tyrolese mountain carols about it; and "Evening Breezes," a *morceau* for the pianoforte, in which the *andante* movement strikes us as being fresh and pretty.

Nicholas Heins' "Grand March" is a good specimen of martial music, without being too noisy for performance indoors, too often the fault of military compositions. "Life's Seasons," and "The Fountain," are two songs of more than ordinary merit.

"The Latest Thing that's Out," and "The Naggletons," two comic duets, published by B. Williams, Paternoster-row, are very good of their kind. The words of both are by J. E. Carpenter, and, we may observe, are entirely free from any trace of vulgarity; which, as comic songs go, is high praise.

J. Williams, Berners-street, sends us "Rhine Bells" and "Rhine Legends," the latter by Arthur Grenville, the former by Harold Thomas. These are two pianoforte pieces on the charming Rhine-land melodies, effectively and brilliantly harmonized.

"Scotia," a fantasia on Scotch airs, introducing such very old favourites as "Auld Lang Syne," "The Campbells are Comin'," and the "Blue Bells of Scotland," is an equally good piece by the same composer—Harold Thomas.

We can also accord a word of commendation to "Heaven," a sacred song, and "Come again, oh happy Dreams," a very pretty ballad, with chorus arranged for four voices.

THE MORTIMERS :

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK III.—CHAPTER XIII.

LONG LIVE THE DUKE!

WHEN Mr. Grobey had swallowed his whisky punch, and wished his numerous friends and admirers good night, he prepared to accompany the servant-maid to Upper Gore-street. The distance of the Victoria from Mrs. Grafton's was not very great; but seeing a passing cab, Grobey hailed it, and the two got in, and were soon on their way to Upper Gore-street.

"What in the name of goodness does Mrs. G. want me for?" the tragedian asked of his companion, when they were seated in the cab.

"Oh, sir, please sir, there's been a most awful to do with Missis and Miss Bertie; and her aunt's been talking dreadful to her."

"Why," exclaimed Grobey, "what is it all about? What has Miss Bertie been doing?"

"Oh, I don't know, sir," said the terrified maid; "but it's dreadful; something about a letter as Missis got hold of and read."

"Phe-ew," was Grobey's reply, given in a lengthened stage whistle.

On his arrival, the actor found his friend, Mrs. Grafton, in a very excited state of mind.

"Oh, Mr. Grobey," was all she said to him when he entered her room; but she placed in his hands a note, written in rather a schoolboy's style, and headed by a rampant lion in red and gold, whose fierce visage was proudly surmounted by the Fitz-boodle coronet.

It was at once a declaration of the most undying, unquenchable love, and an offer of marriage—to take place immediately if agreeable—from that wealthy young spooney, "your devoted Albert F."

When Grobey had read the letter he folded it, and abstractedly replaced it in its crested envelope.

"I declare it's monstrous," cried Mrs. Grafton, indignantly. "I am actually distracted by the conduct of them young men."

"It is monstrous, ma'am," said Grobey, soothingly.

"I've suspected her for ever so long," Mrs. Grafton continued, "and I had made

up my mind to open and read the very first of them letters as I could chance to lay my hands on."

"Quite right, ma'am," said the actor, in his softest and most approving tones.

"I knoo you'd excuse me for sending for you, but I'm at my wits' ends to know what to do."

"Mrs. G.," said Grobey, "I'd—I'd excuse anything, ma'am, where that de-ar girl is concerned."

"I thought they might make a rush upon the house, or something awful. I've often read of such things. A note tied in a bow-kay I can put up with, but letters like that I cannot bear."

"Certainly not, ma'am. It is not to be expected that, at your time of life, you can bear so much excitement."

"She shall never put her foot inside a theatre again. Upon that I'm perfectly determined."

"Give me your hand on that, ma'am," cried Grobey, impulsively seizing the old lady's hand, "give me your hand upon that, Mrs. G. You're—you are the—the best, the most sensible woman I ever knew."

"Mr. Grobey!"

"Yes, my dear madam, you are, though you perhaps do not know it. Bertie—your niece, Miss Grafton—would never act if she lived to be as old as Methuselah—"

"She's a talented gurl, Mr. Grobey," said the old lady, proudly, preparing to take up the cudgels in defence of her niece. "And many times I've heard you say so."

"She is a young lady of the highest talent, we all know, Mrs. G. But burlesques are not tragedy; they are not comedy, Mrs. G.—argal, they are not acting."

"Well, these are things I don't pretend to understand, Mr. Grobey. You've been on the stage a long time, and, though I say it to you, a good actor, and if anybody knows you ought."

"Just so, Mrs. G.—just so. I say Miss Bertie will never act in that sense—meaning, of course, tragedy and comedy. She has not the fire, the passion—"

"And very glad I am of it," said Mrs. Grafton, interrupting him; "for inside the doors of any of them theatres she shall never go again, if the manager brings twenty actions for breach of engagements against me."

"I am delighted to hear you are so determined in the matter, my dear madam.

As for action for breach, I think I can make that all right."

"The little hussy," continued Bertie's aunt, "she turns the heads of all the men with those dark eyes of hers. I declare, since she went to that place, it has been my whole business to dangle about after her. What they all see to fall in love with, I don't know."

"See, madam!" said the tragedian, rising, fixing his gaze on the ceiling, and majestically waving his white hands. "See! say you? Perfection—perfection—not 'on iv'ry traced'—but wearing the glowing impress of life. *I—I* love your niece to—to distraction!"

As he made this avowal, he fell gracefully on one knee at Mrs. Grafton's feet, and seized both her hands with his.

"Lord bless the men!" exclaimed his astonished landlady, as soon as she had disengaged her hands, and was enabled to throw them up in blank amazement.

And from that day Mrs. Grafton kept her word. The name of Miss Bertie Howard hurriedly and mysteriously disappeared from the play-bills at the Variety; and a strong, and it was believed impenetrable, barrier was placed around her. But prison walls may be scaled, and gaolers are not always wide awake.

From this day, too, Mr. Robert Grobey had the permission of her aunt to pay his addresses to Miss Bertie Grafton. In this unexpected way Erle was saved the trouble of hinting to Mrs. Grafton the state of the actor's affections. In the hope of winning the heart of the woman he loved, Grobey was happy.

For her part, Bertie bore her confinement pretty well. At first she was very petulant and very much inclined to remain in the sulks for a day at the time. But soon she acquiesced in her aunt's decision, and declared that she did not care so much about the stage after all. And, to the surprise of all parties interested in her welfare, cheered up, and in a few days became quite herself again. She put away her stage finery, and settled down to those little household duties she had been in the habit of performing before she had made any appearance in public. She appeared to have given way to her aunt's wishes without reluctance and without regret. She found a friend and confidante in the servant-maid, and from her—under a searching cross-examination—something

might possibly have been elicited tending to show the causes of Bertie's resignation to her fate. Reginald Erle's photograph had been replaced in her album, and the gentleman who had discovered it there had paid no further visits to Upper Gore-street.

In a set of chambers in Piccadilly—gorgeous, expensive, and facing the park, with that fine view of the noble Palace of Buckingham—was an elaborate bijou drawing-room, fitted up in the most fashionable manner by the most fashionable upholsterers in Bond-street. There were curtains of pale sea-green silk, there was a carpet of the same pale green hue, with bunches of the most delicate white roses upon it that ever left the looms of Brussels. There was furniture in green and white satin, carefully preserved by covers of clean-looking chintz, and a profusion of statuettes, drawings, clocks, and other objects of art and vertu. A writing-table was wheeled up to the sofa near the window, and upon it were writing materials. The paper and envelopes were edged with black, and upon them was stamped in black a ducal coronet. On the sofa, in a half sitting, half reclining posture, was a pale, slim young man, clad in the garments of decorous but fashionable woe. He was engaged in writing a letter on the mourning note-paper. On his thin finger glittered a costly diamond in a setting of black enamel. A betting-book, some bills, and a couple of old race cards, lay in a disorderly way on his table. There was a noisy rushing up the stairs, a bang at the door, and in ran Mr. Jack Childers, hot and out of breath.

"Your Grace of Fairholme," said he, "I'm come to pay you a visit of con—what now?—dolence or—gratulation?"

"Which you like, Jack," said Malton, smiling.

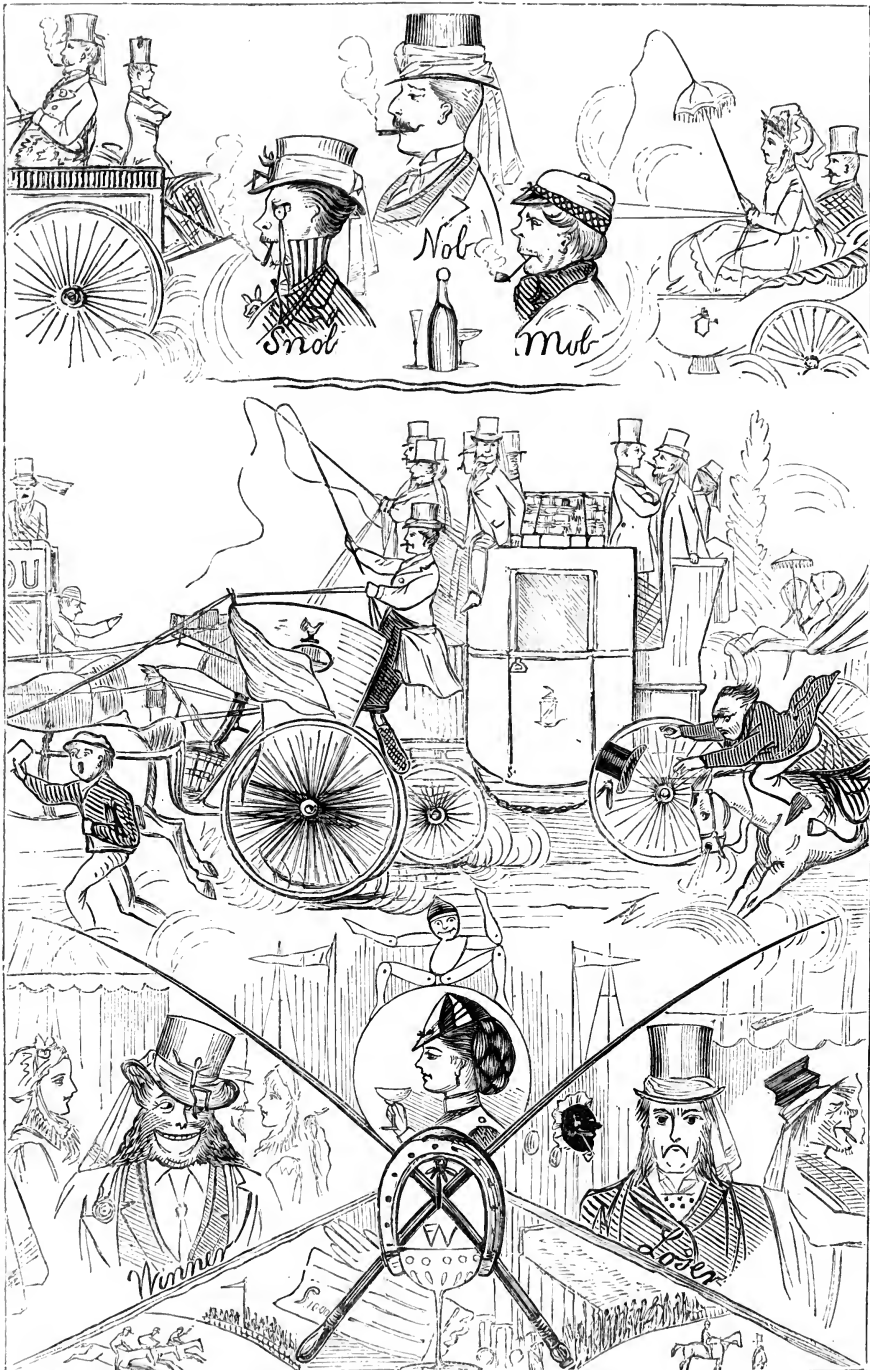
"You are a lucky fellow," said his old friend; "I hope you will live for ever in the enjoyment of it. What are you going to do?"

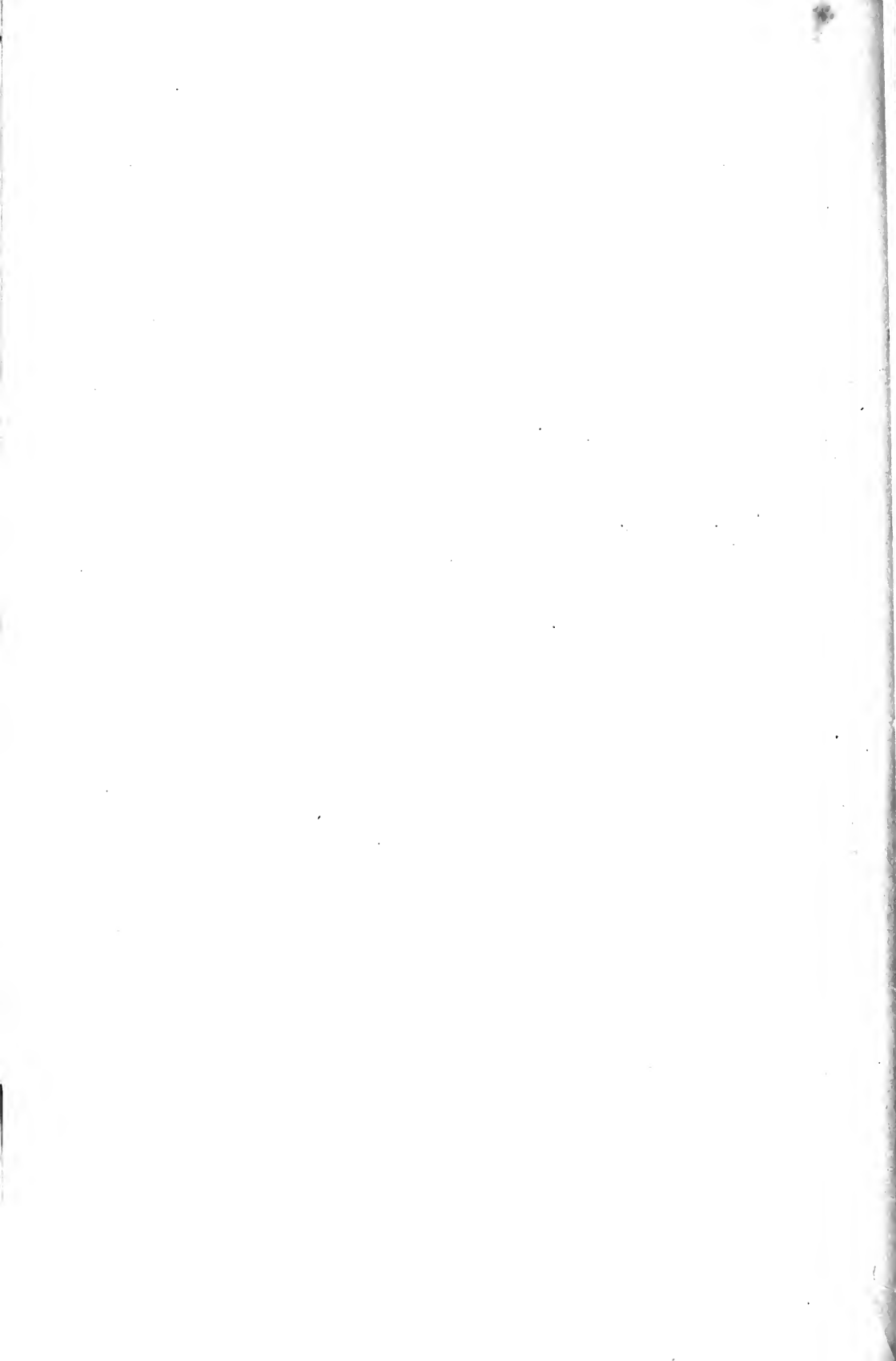
"I hardly know yet. Pay up some of the people, I suppose."

"You'll have to pay up for all of us now, like a brick. I wish to gad I'd dropped in for a fortune."

"Help yourself to some claret," said Fairholme, pointing to the jug and glasses on the table in the middle of the room.

Mr. Jack Childers filled a tumbler with claret, and emptied it at a draught.





"Not so bad, Freddy," he said, as he placed his glass on the tray, and meditatively refilled it.

"No; it is some of the old stuff. Help yourself, my boy."

The boy had already done so. There was an agreeable freedom about poor Jack's manners that endeared him to all his friends.

"Is there any of the 'ready' in all this," said Jack presently, as he looked over his friend's shoulder at the papers on his table.

"Haven't touched a copper yet," replied Fairholme.

"You don't mean it. Now look me in the face and say you are serious."

"You want that five pony bet I laid you, I suppose."

"Right, old fellow—I had it in my mind's eye. Don't, if you can't spare it, for the world. But just now I am most infernally hard-up."

Fairholme took a book full of the green paper slips of a well-known private bank.

"Who is it that is so infernally hard-up?" cried Charles Mortimer, who had called upon Fairholme, accompanied by a friend. "I thought nobody was so poor as I am."

"Ah! Charlie," said Fairholme.

"By jingo," said Childers, in reply to Charles Mortimer's question, "you are a young and lively specimen of the species 'millionaire' compared with me. You've got a father and an uncle with hearts under their coats, but I am without either."

"You've got a parent, Jack?"

"Yes; but, confound him, he's such a pauper of a parent. I haven't been able to screw one individual sixpence out of him for above three months."

"Poor old Jack," said Charles, with feeling. "I quite pity you."

"I've only one consolation," said Childers, as he put down his glass.

"Why, what is that?"

"It is that the governor is as poor as I am, and doesn't know how to turn round. He is not bad when any portion of the rents reach his hands. I get a cheque then—just enough to pay my blacking bill."

"You should do without varnish for your boots, as I do," said Mortimer's friend.

"Is he going to do it?" thought Mr. Childers, as he glanced towards the table at which Fairholme sat. His countenance fell when he saw the cheque-book had been pushed aside.

"Confound those fellows!" he thought, "they just came in here in time to do me out of my one, two, five."

"How is the old boy?" Fairholme asked, looking up.

"Sir Harold, do you mean?" inquired Charles.

"Yes; how is he? Heard from them since they went down to Madingley?"

"Why, what's the matter with him?" demanded Mr. Jack, pricking up his ears. "I did not know there was anything in the wind. Is the old boy ill?"

"Oh dear, no!" replied Charles, carelessly; "nor likely to be. Uncles live for ever you know, Jack."

"About his eyes, I meant," said Fairholme.

"Oh, his eyes are worse, I believe; he talks of having a secretary, or companion, or something of the sort."

"Can't see his hand before him, can he?" said Childers. "I heard the governor say it was not safe for him to ride about, six months ago."

"He can't ride," said Charles.

"Pon my soul, I am sorry for him," said Fairholme; "he is the jolliest old brick in this world!"

"What is this secretary going to do or to be?" asked Childers.

"A sort of friend or companion, read the papers, write letters, and so on," said Charles.

"Is he to be young or old?"

"Young, I shall advise," replied Charles.

"By jingo! now, if I had only learnt to read and write, and that sort of thing, the job would have suited me. I want a good place," said Childers.

"You could have exercised the horses, Jack," said Fairholme.

"So could you, Malton—and not much more," retorted Jack.

"You were such a favourite with Mabel and Aunt Margaret always, Jack. You would have been quite one of the family."

"Dashed if I don't see Sir Harold about it," said Childers; "there must be an end some day to living on three hundred a-year—not paid."

"You need not go to Sir Harold," said Fairholme, laughing. "I shall want a secretary myself; you shall help me with my accounts, Jack."

"I can assist you in getting your book round," said Childers; "and I think I know a horse when I see one."

"I mean to do the old place up and go in for a stud of clippers now," said Fairholme.

"By Jove! here's Fitz!" he exclaimed, as Mr. Albert Fitzboodle walked slowly into the room.

Taking his friend's hand into his own fat paw, which was bursting through his lavender glove, he said:—

"Malton, I condole with you—that is, if condolence is the pwoper thing."

"As you like, Fitz," said Fairholme; "but we did not expect to see you; we thought you were off out of town."

"Out of town!" said Fitzboodle, in surprise.

"Bolted, eloped, gone off," said Childers. "Gone off! Where?"

"Mysterious disappearance of a young lady from a leading metropolitan theatre. Have you not heard of it?"

"Don't chaff, old boy. It is a mystewious affair. I am aware of her disappeawance."

"You know where she is?" said Charles Mortimer.

"I kn—know her addwess," replied the innocent Fitz, colouring slightly. "But what in the world is the good of that?"

"You have been proposing to her. You are going to run off with her!" said Charles.

Mr. Albert Fitzboodle became very red indeed.

"No—not pwoposing," he said; "no, 'pon my honour. But I would marvy her if she would have me. Some of you fellows have been cutting me out—I know you have!"

There was a good deal of fun and banter at the expense of Mr. Albert Fitzboodle, and talk upon a variety of topics of interest, before Fairholme's visitors left him. Charles Mortimer was the last to take his leave, although Childers had lingered as long as he possibly could, having an eye upon the cheque; but at last he reluctantly departed without it. Fairholme had forgotten all about it, or it would have been written and carried off by Jack, and speedily cashed by that impecunious gentleman.

"By the bye," said Fairholme, "what was all that you were saying about Sir Harold having a secretary or something?"

"He has been told to do so for his own sake. The doctors will not operate upon his eyes for a long time to come, even if he would submit to it, which is very doubtful. So he consented to have somebody always

at hand to do anything he wants. He wishes to have a gentleman—somebody he can put confidence in, and all that."

"Well?" said Fairholme.

"He asked me if I knew anybody likely to do for him."

"Did you?"

"I have the identical man—the best possible fellow for uncle Harold, if we had picked all England over—a fellow that will suit him to perfection in all ways."

"That is all right, then," said Fairholme, as Charles Mortimer went down the stairs.

CHAPTER XIV.

CAMPBELL'S ADVICE.

ERLE was sitting in his room in Upper Gore-street one morning about ten days after the date of our last chapter. He was smoking a pipe after his lunch, and reading a book he held in his hand with so much attention that he hardly heard the door opened, or knew that he had a visitor, until he recognized the friendly voice and Scotch accent of his old friend Campbell, as his kindly salutation rang in his ears.

"Campbell!" he cried, throwing down his book, and hastening to greet his friend. "Why, who thought of seeing you? I thought you were safely ensconced within the walls of Tudor, grinding away at Latin and Greek."

"I have been in London some little time."

"How long—only a day or two?"

"Days and—I fear I must confess it, Erle—weeks. But not many of the latter."

"And you have not been to see me before!" said Erle.

"No; I must plead guilty," replied Campbell, "to a most unwarrantable degree of neglect. But since I have been here I have been idle, and inclined to put off coming to see you from day to day, until I was on the very point of going out of town; when I have, as you see, found my way to you."

"And, though shamefully neglectful of you, I have forgiven you," said Erle; "and, in the pleasure of seeing you again, I have forgotten your misconduct."

"Then I will promise not to be an offender in the same matter again. I have been much wishing for a long talk with you."

"I had not," said Erle, who had hardly recovered from his surprise, "the slightest notion you were in London, or I would have poked you out without delay."

"No;" replied Campbell; "it is early for me to be here, but I found I could get away before the end of term, and I took the opportunity of visiting London."

"When do you mean to leave?" Erle asked.

"Well; I think of going this week, certainly. I am going to make a stay at a country house—a charming old house—every corner of which is filled with romance, and where there's a beautiful girl. And, as I love both old country houses and beautiful girls, I expect to enjoy my visit very much."

"I congratulate you in anticipation of the pleasure you are about to enjoy. I am tired enough of London myself."

"Oh, do not misunderstand me," said Campbell; "I am not in the least tired of being here. I could live in London always better than anywhere else—"

"For six or seven months in the year."

"No; all the year round. There is always amusement—food for reflection. Life, men, activity. Such parallels and such contrasts; such wealth and such poverty."

"There is some chance of my leaving all this, though," said Erle; "and I must confess I shall leave it with sorrow or regret."

"You are not going to Paris to join Dr. Gasc?"

"No," replied Erle; "much as I should like to do so for a time, I am not about to do that. I am more than pleased you have come to me to-day. I have some news for you that will gratify you; and I want to take your advice upon a matter of some moment to me. You will have fresh in your recollection the event that caused me to leave Tudor?"

"I have!" said Campbell, with solemn emphasis.

"I misjudged Mortimer. He was intoxicated, and was not master of himself. Somebody near him had prompted him to say what he did."

"Eh!" said Campbell, quickly.

"He has my forgiveness—full, free, and unreserved—for the pain and mischief he caused me. He is one of the frankest and most generous of men."

"Do you believe that?" demanded Mortimer's old instructor.

"I have the strongest reason for doing so. He felt the greatest regret for his inconsiderate and unprovoked attack upon me. His mind, he told me, was never at

rest. He lost sight of me. At last he, quite by accident, discovered my address. Campbell," said Erle, his face flushing with generous emotion, "Campbell, that man of whom I—we—thought so ill, came to me and begged me to pardon him in language I could neither doubt nor resist."

"Now, did he?" said Campbell.

"He did. He asked me for my hand. I gave it. He begged me to look upon him as a friend, if it were possible I could do so."

"You are a very generous fellow, Erle," Campbell observed, smiling.

"I do believe in him, Campbell. I do believe he is sincere and honest; and I am his friend."

"Well, I hope your confidence is not misplaced," said his friend; "I have no reason for thinking that it is."

"Read that," said Erle. "It is from the Rev. Francis Lavelle. You have often heard me speak of him."

"A Roman Catholic priest."

"And my first instructor in the rudiments of polite learning," said Erle, laughing. "You see that he says in his letter he has obtained for me the post of private secretary to a member of Parliament."

"An Irish Roman Catholic," said Campbell, reading. "I know the family by name. They will make a Catholic of you."

"No; they will not try to do that," Erle replied. "Do you think I ought to take that position in preference to another I shall presently mention?"

"Until I know the relative advantages of both, I can hardly advise you," said his friend. "Your Jesuit instructor knows how to write a very kind letter. I should say his interest in you is perfectly genuine, and uninfluenced by any ulterior motives."

"Father Francis," Erle replied—"for by that name we always called him when he was one of the family in Bartholomew-square—has always been extremely kind to me, and has ever shown the greatest readiness to serve me in any way that lay in his power. When my funds were suddenly cut off by the calamity that happened to Dr. Gasc, Lavelle instantly offered to let me draw upon his own purse. Of course, I have not done so. I know he cannot have much money to spare. Nor have I wanted money hitherto. But now I am most anxious to obtain some appointment for which I am properly qualified, and by which I may at least support myself."

"In doing so you are acting not only creditably, but wisely," said Campbell.

"Two offers have been made me," Erle continued. "The letter you have just read explains all I know about that one, and I think of accepting it at once. It will be a source of pleasure to Lavelle that I should have been supplied with the post I wanted through his influence; and, everything considered, I can hardly bring myself to accept the other, although the remuneration, honorarium, or salary, or whatever I may call it, is larger, and it is in every way more desirable than the post in the service of the Irish M.P."

"You are a better judge than I am," said Campbell; "but you forget, you have not told me what the other offer is at all."

"Let us go out and stroll towards the park," said Erle; "it is a very fine day, and we can talk as we walk along."

"I shall be very happy to do so," said Campbell. "I have not taken nearly my usual amount of walking exercise since I have been in London."

After they had walked at a leisurely pace along a street or two, Erle resumed the conversation about his own affairs.

"It is to act as companion, and transact some business for a gentleman you know, whose sight is not good," Erle began.

"Not for Sir Harold Mortimer. Charles did not convey that to you from his uncle."

"He did. You would not advise me to accept it."

"You will accept it without one moment's delay," said Campbell, taking Erle's arm, and hurrying him along as if something could be done in the matter immediately. "It is to Madingley Chase that I am going myself for a few days. We shall go together, and you will like Sir Harold better than anybody you ever knew. I shall leave you there quite one of the family when I return to Tudor."

THE FESSEN-PENNY.

PERHAPS some of our readers may not know what is a "fessen-penny." It is a word that might have been used by Tennyson's "Northern Farmer;" for it is a common word amongst the farmers and farm-labourers of Lincolnshire, and is their East-Anglian pronunciation of fasten-penny. It is the so-called "penny," or coin (for it is usually a shilling), which fastens and

closes the bargain at the "statty" or statute-fair between the hirer and the hired; so that it is analogous to the recruiting sergeant's shilling. The fasten-penny closes the bargain for a twelvemonth; and at the end of the year the person hired is free to accept another fasten-penny from a new employer. This custom exists at the present time, and was put in force during the recent May statutes. This giving and taking of the fessen-penny for a twelvemonth reminds us, in some degree, of that peculiar custom called "handfasting" (or taking a wife on trial for a twelvemonth), which formerly existed in Scotland, and which had not disappeared from Eskdalemuir, Dumfriesshire, even in the past century. The couple who handfasted were at liberty to part company at the end of the twelvemonth, if they so desired it; and any child who was born "under handfasting" was accounted legitimate. And this custom was not, at first, restricted to the common people. Thus, it is said that Robert III. of Scotland was the son of Robert II. by his "handfasted" wife, Elizabeth More; and that he, therefore, succeeded to the throne in preference to the children of Robert II. by his lawful wife, Euphemia, daughter of the Earl of Ross. This rule, however, was not always observed; for when Macneil of Borra put away his handfasted wife (a Maclean), he repudiated her children in favour of those by his marriage with one of the Clanranalds. A deadly feud between the Macdonalds of Islay and Macleods of Skye, which lasted for some centuries, arose from a handfast wife being sent back by Macdonald, at the end of a twelvemonth, to her father. Macleod vowed vengeance, and swore that, as there had been no wedding bonfire, there should be a fire to celebrate the divorce; and he carried his threat into execution by devastating Islay with fire and sword.

In 1608 a commission, consisting of the Archbishop of Glasgow, the Bishop of the Isles (Andrew Knox), Andrew Stewart, Lord Ochiltree, and Sir James Hay of Kingask, was held at Aross Castle, Mull (a seat of the Macleans), to confer with the chiefs of the Western Isles, and to advise them as to the measures contemplated by government. One of these measures was that handfast marriages were no longer to be considered legal; and that the custom of taking a wife on trial for a twelvemonth must be abolished.

What this commission of clergy and laity effected with regard to handfasting is now being sought to be done by the clergy and laity of our own day with the fessen-penny and the statute-fairs; and it is to be hoped that the servants' registration societies will gradually exterminate the evil custom of which the fessen-penny is a token. Such societies have now been established in many English counties, and in some of them have had a standing of some years, and met with success. Here and there they have languished for lack of adequate support, as was the case, for example, with the Worcester Society; but, phoenix-like, it has taken a new lease of life, and, under the auspices of the lord-lieutenant of the county—Lord Lyttelton—who has befriended the movement from the first, it has, in this present year, been re-established on a basis which augurs a permanent durability and success. In the interests of society, more especially of the agricultural community, it is to be hoped that such establishments will increase and succeed; and that the May and Michaelmas "hirings," "statutes," and "mops"—three names for this Cerberian institution—may have been altogether supplanted by them, and that farm-servants may be henceforth engaged in a manner less resembling a slave-show or cattle-market.

These statutes are called "sittings" in Yorkshire, where they are held for three weeks at Martinmas. The singular word "mop"—derived from Nero's *mappa*, or handkerchief, dropped as the signal for the commencement of the Roman games—we explained in our "Table Talk," Dec. 19, 1868, p. 517; and the still more curious phrase, "runaway mop," applied to a Worcestershire statute-fair held out of its usual course, received our notice in "Table Talk," Jan. 15, 1870, p. 549. We, therefore, need not further speak of them; but in all these mops, statutes, sittings, and hirings, the fessen-penny is an essential portion of the custom, and is the accepted sign of the contract between the employer and employed being closed for a twelvemonth. The farm-servant who has once accepted the fessen-penny, and entered upon his situation, cannot, in fact, discharge himself under the twelvemonth; and cases have come within our own immediate knowledge where the labourer, being dissatisfied with his place, has left it at the end of six months; and, for so doing, has been brought by his master be-

fore a magistrate, who has fined him for absconding from service, and compelled him to serve the whole twelve months that were agreed for in the contract by his acceptance of the fessen-penny.

We are often reminded that the stage "holds the mirror up to Nature"; but, as there are such things as distorting glasses, perhaps the mirror of the stage may possess this distorting medium in some portion of its presumptive reflections of scenes from real life. It most certainly is the case with regard to the fessen-penny and statute-fairs. General Burgoyne, whose plays had, in their day, a fugitive popularity, introduced a scene of a statute-fair into his comedy, "The Maid of the Oaks," which was as untrue to actual circumstances as was Isaac Bickerstaff's representation of a similar scene in his musical farce, "Love in a Village," where the various farm-labourers who are waiting to be hired come forward and sing, in turn, a verse descriptive of their abilities. But, probably, the theatrical representation of a statute-fair that will be most familiar to our readers is that in Flotow's opera of "Marta." This pretty opera is such a favourite that no London season passes without some one or more performances of it. In the present season of 1870, it was produced at the Italian Opera, Drury-lane, on May 16, with Madame Trebelli-Bettini and Madame Volpini (the *début* of the latter), Mr. Santley, Signors Bettini and Zoboli in the chief characters; and on the following evening, May 17, it was produced at the Royal Italian Opera, Covent-garden, with Madame Adelina Patti as the Lady Enrichetta. A fortnight before, she had chosen the second act of "Marta" as a portion of the performances at her benefit at the Italiens Opera House in Paris—a notable occasion, as it was stated to be her farewell of the Parisian stage. A person, who was present on the occasion, thus describes the scene:—"The reception of the favourite *cantatrice* was extraordinarily quiet and cold; as she entered in 'Marta,' in her pretty peasant's dress, scarcely any applause rose to meet her. It was the scene in which the princess and her companion—having gone, disguised as peasant girls, to the serving-maids' fair to beguile their *ennui*, and there having unwarily received from two handsome young farmers the silver coins which, according to the rules of the fair, close the engagements between

masters and servants—are brought to the farm by their new and most satisfied masters to begin work. The pretty quartet at the spinning-wheels—in which the girls show their high-bred ignorance by breaking and entangling the threads, and then stand by, laughing merrily, as the young men set themselves to show these pretty, stupid maids how to spin, the wheel whirling merrily round to the sweet, bright music of the four voices—was sung with great animation; but still the audience clapped coldly, and Madame Patti—not even recalled once after the fall of the curtain—gave vent in her *loge* to the indignant expression that the audience was so cold that she would never sing again in Paris—never! But she is too true an *artiste* to allow this to depress her acting; and her audience, in her next scenes from “Linda,” warmed into the most demonstrative enthusiasm, and nearly buried her in bouquets.

That statute-fair scene is very pretty on the operatic stage, and Patti takes the fessen-penny with demure coquetry. But, in sober seriousness, how untruthful it is! the stage’s distorting mirror has, indeed, in “Marta” been held up to nature. *Audi alteram partem*; and read the latest official account of a statute-fair, as it is recorded in the blue-book just issued with the third report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the employment of women and children in agriculture. Their field of inquiry has been South Wales; and Mr. Portman strongly condemns the almost universal method of hiring agricultural servants at the statute-fairs held in May and November. “As many as five hundred young men and women,” he says, “come to the great Mop-fair at Monmouth, which takes place in May. They hire themselves out for the year, and most of them come back again at the end of the year to the next fair. They are generally worse characters than the people who keep steadily to one place; they never seem to get attached to one locality. They do a deal of harm in the town. Each public-house has its fiddler, and a dance generally takes place. They are almost all unmarried.” Testimony is also made as to the way in which these statute-fairs unsettle the servants, and disappoint the expectations of the employers; and yet, as is evident, those employers could prevent all this by simply staying away from the statutes, and engaging their

workpeople either at registration offices or in other ways. But farmers, for the most part, prefer to tread in the old ruts—*stare super antiquas vias*—and to do as their fathers have done before them; and they do not like to abolish the fessen-penny.

Of course, the labourers have much to say, on their side of the question, why statute-fairs and the fessen-penny should be preserved to them intact; for they have so few holidays, that they look forward to the mop or statute as their annual carnival and merry-making; and, if their holiday is abolished, it is only fair and just to provide them with an equivalent. The extension and growing popularity of harvest-homes will do a great deal to effect this, in the stead of the Michaelmas and Martinmas hirings. But there remain the May statutes to be dealt with. Here and there, in the midland counties, a “Mop Tea” has been established; and, despite the singularity of its name, has, for some years past, had an increasing success. The word “tea” shows that the wives and daughters are expected to share with the men in the merry-making; but there is substantial meat and beer also provided, with cricket, dancing, and various outdoor and indoor amusements. And on this very last “May-day”—which was Monday, the 2nd of May—a May festival was held in more than one parish, in order to provide the labourers with a substitute for their annual mop holiday.

Although statute-fairs flourish, like weeds of evil growth, in Wales and Scotland, and in many English counties, yet there are not indications wanting that, in another generation, they may be looked upon as relics of the past, and that neither farmers nor labourers will henceforth give or take the fessen-penny.

TABLE TALK.

UNDER THE TITLE “Manchester and Oxford,” a Lancashire magistrate writes a letter to a contemporary, in which he says that the corporation of Manchester has offered a reward of five hundred pounds for the conviction of the men who destroyed Mr. Johnson’s bricks, and did their best to blow his house. “Suppose,” says this J. P., “the persons guilty of this dastardly outrage should be arrested, would the public expect the magistrates to convict these miscreants, when the men at Oxford—guilty of

equally as great offences, are allowed to escape?" Now the first blast of virtuous indignation has passed over, and the Christ Church iconoclasts have received the punishment they richly deserved, we may say a word or two about their offence, especially as a certain section of the public takes a view of the case very like that entertained by the worthy Lancashire magistrate whose letter we quote. In the first place, we may observe that the only parallel between the two cases is, that both the disaffected bricklayers at Manchester and the mischievous young men at Oxford did as much mischief as they could. These men were cultivated, the operatives cultureless; and so much more is their conduct to the discredit of the gentlemen. But their action arose from pure thoughtlessness and frolic. They never thought of the mischief they were doing. They never stopped to consider that they were gentlemen, members of a distinguished society—that the eyes of England were upon them. Doubtless the affair originated thus:—One idle young man suggested to some others that it would be a fine lark to take a pane of glass out of the library, and lift "old Gaisford" off his pedestal, and put him out in the quad. From an undergraduate point of view it was a very fine piece of fun. Well, the idea takes. They go into the library, and bring out, not only "old Gaisford," but one or two other marbles with him. They leave them on the grass-plot, and retire to their rooms to laugh at what they have done. Another party now appears on the scene, and conceives the notion of capping the joke by making a "jolly blaze" round the figures. This is done, and the statues become discoloured, smoke-stained, and utterly spoiled. No doubt the practical jokers were extremely sorry for their pains when they beheld the result. But they are rather to be pitied than blamed. They are the result of the system under which they have grown up. Take a boy from Eton, remove all restraint and discipline, except the name, and call him an Oxford man, and if he is naturally a fool do not be surprised at his folly. To talk of taking criminal proceedings against these young men was the very height of absurdity. They are sufficiently and properly punished by the authorities of their own college. At Oxford there are at least a couple of thousand young men in *statu pupillari*; of these the vast majority are men

of sense, who conduct themselves as young English gentlemen should. Is it to be wondered at that, out of this number, a few thoughtless and silly fellows should be found? Or that they should, once in a way, perpetrate an act as mischievous, senseless, and reprehensible as making a bonfire of the least inflammable portion of the property of that society upon which their doings inflict injury, but can hardly bring disgrace?

OUR ATTENTION HAS BEEN attracted to the following advertisement, which has appeared in some of the papers:—

Now ready, No. 1 of the

POETICAL MAGAZINE:

A Periodical devoted to the Writings of
AMATEUR POETS.

Price 6d., monthly.

Contributions are solicited.

It is hardly likely that the magazine in question will be said to supply a public want. But its appearance will be hailed with delight by the "amateur poets," whoever and whatever they may be. And the institution of such a repository for the productions of the scribbling rhymers of England, Ireland, and Scotland, will confer a great boon upon the editors of all other magazines in which verses ever appear. No doubt the editorial letter-box of the "Poetical Magazine" will be filled to overflowing by the willing hands of the "amateur poets." In our own interest and theirs we append the address to which contributions may be sent:—

"All letters relative to the literary department to be addressed to the Editor, care of Judd and Glass, Doctors' Commons, E.C. Published by Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., Stationers' Hall-court."

ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL and interesting works issued during the past month is that entitled "The Arts of the Middle Ages, and of the Renaissance Period: by Paul Lacroix, 'Bibliophile Jacob'"—which passes in review all the arts, from the fourth century to the latter half of the sixteenth century. In the portion relating to bookbinding, the author shows, by means of an engraving of the seventeenth century, how, in the library of Leyden, all the books were chained to the reading-desk. A very curious example of this ancient custom is to be seen in the archive-room and library of Hereford Cathedral—a lofty room, with groined roof, occupying the whole of the

upper portion of the north transept. Besides the various cases and chests, there are numerous upright presses, containing two thousand books of great antiquity, and, in many instances, of great rarity. The original Wickliffe Bible is there, and numerous manuscripts on vellum, gorgeously illuminated. The bookshelves are placed back to back in two upright presses, with a reading desk at each end. Each book is clamped with iron, and fastened by a chain to an iron rod that runs along each shelf. This rod is let into a catch at either end, where it is fastened with a padlock. Each chained book can be taken from its place and made to slide along the rod, and thus brought to the reading-desk at the end; but it could not be taken any farther unless the padlock was unlocked. In many of the books rushes have been found, which had evidently been picked up from the rush-strewn floor by the reader, and placed within the book to mark his place when he wished to refer to the volume at a future time. English readers of Lacroix's work may care to know of this Anglican example still to be seen in Hereford Cathedral.

BUT, IN THE WORK JUST MENTIONED, M. Lacroix is in error when he makes the bagpipe so exclusively a Scottish "musical instrument." Who first invented the bagpipe? "is a question yet to be solved," says J. F. Campbell, in his "Popular Tales of the West Highlands" (iv., p. 404); but they are to be met with in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Albania; and something like them is to be seen in old English prints and old German pictures. McCulloch says that the bagpipe "has been known from almost all antiquity, and has been found all over the world"; and "was used among the Greeks and Romans" ("Highland and Western Isles," iv., 281). And in Dalzell's "Musical Memoirs of Scotland," much curious information will be found as to the universal love for the bagpipe. It would seem, however, to be a moot question whether we may refer the origin of the instrument to the Gothic or Celtic nations.

IN THE "TABLE TALK" OF ONCE A WEEK, Feb. 13, 1869, there was published a clever double acrostic, the leading words of which were made up of letters that, backwards and forwards, read the same. A shoal of answers were received from

various correspondents, most of whom correctly solved the riddle as Glenelg (Gog, Level, Eye, Noon, Eve, Lepel, Gag). One correspondent afterwards suggested that the double acrostic was framed on an older one, composed in the same way, each word of which, "both backwards and forwards, is always the same." This riddle was quoted in "Table Talk," March 6, 1869; and another correspondent (March 27, 1869) proclaimed the latter riddle to be by Miss Ritson, of Lowestoft, published in Sand's "Specimens of Macaronic Poetry," 1831. The answer to the whole is the word "Madam." We refer to this because our contemporary, "Notes and Queries," has recently (April 16, 1870, p. 381) published the following riddle on the same word, "Madam;" and, though composed in a different manner to Miss Ritson's, it is equally ingenious. We therefore quote it, as a pendant to her double acrostic:—

"A woman, tho' my head and tail are both of them the same;
And still, both head and tail cut off, I bear a woman's name.
You may turn me topsy-turvy, but the change will nought avail—
A woman, whether taken by the head or by the tail.
But when you cut my head off, should my tail escape the shears,
Metamorphosed to a man then, the woman disappears."

A Cambridge correspondent of "Notes and Queries" (April 30, p. 429) thus solved the riddle:—

"If M and M be head and tail, then MADAM will agree.
If head and tail be both cut off, still ADA's name I see.
The topsy-turvy turning will nought certainly avail;
For MADAM forward-backward read, she's woman without fail.
Cut off the head, and let the tail escape the docking shears,
We've ADAM; but A DAM denies that woman disappears—
Or feminine, at any rate, if our fastidious ears
Refuse to womankind the name, though given in olden years."

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OR,

MEMOIRS OF A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY.

BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

CHAPTER XXIII.



DUE time the marriage was talked of—becoming not a nine days' wonder, as it is called, but the wonder of a few hours, if wonder it were. The happy pair—happy always *de rigueur*,

much as a military member of the House of Commons is always "gallant"—went off to a noble castle belonging to the Earl St. Arthurs for the honeymoon, where they were to "sojourn" for a week, then repair to the Continent for an "extended" tour. The great gathering at Banff was broken up; the noble guests all departed for their homes, and the bridesmaids wore their lockets. The various friends commented on the alliance after different fashions; some wondering what on earth the Duke had in his head—some deep plan no doubt; others thinking it a distinguished alliance, yet not seeing their way at all to its significance. The Duke himself would presently begin to

discount it; and was supposed, within a very short time, to have received some advantages.

Mr. Benbow was now at home again in his lone castle, with that new, fatal companion in his study. The Sword had travelled with him from Banff; had appeared in the railway carriage, swinging and dangling over his head—a miniature Sword, suited to the height of that chamber—and to which his eyes glanced with nervousness and terror. It was a full carriage, and the talk rambled about gaily, and even spasmodically, touching on matters carelessly, but which made him start and wince and glare wildly. This was torment; and its peculiar shape was, that every subject indifferently seemed to stir the Sword, and make it sway perilously.

But the desperate question that pressed upon him now was, What was the next step to be taken in the affair? As we have seen, he knew not where to begin.

His first step was to send to a newsagent in town to collect him as many American newspapers as possible. This agent did what he could, but, as a matter of course, the collected newspapers would amount to very little; and it would be impossible to get together the strange gathering of newspapers which came out in Massachusetts and Connecticut—thousands, perhaps—and find what he hoped—or, rather, what he did *not* hope—to find.

It was evident that nothing could be got in this direction to set his mind at rest. He must endure still the agonizing prostration of suspense. He had an agent—a useful, practical, machine-minded man—who, without much intelligence, would carry out any scheme he was put to, much as a mill would grind anything put into it. This man—one Hawkes, half clerk, half working man—he determined to send away at once to America to hunt up this matter; and he believed, if she were to be found, this agent would dis-

cover her. He was to be diligent, quick, sure, and certain; and, above all, to telegraph at once.

He started, and Mr. Benbow felt a sort of relief. Something at least was doing, or going to be done. People still were wondering at the change in his looks—the curious, restless manner—the unsatisfied bearing which had come over him, in place of the exultation which had been so naturally expected on this dazzling *coup*.

But even within a few days he got a fresh blow, for he read in the great paper of the day — “Thunderer,” “Giant,” “Leading Journal,” or whatever the obsequiousness of the age delights in styling it—the whole flourish, setting out the marriage in all its glory. He had spoken carelessly with the Duke about this, saying he thought it was an idle ceremony—made an undue splash and flourish. But the Duke was coldly firm—looked upon it as a sort of official act. He had then undertaken it himself, determining to forget it. But he now saw it flaming in large type as a “Marriage in High Life,” with list of company; and received the next day a rather reproving letter from the Duke, saying that he had seen to the matter himself.

Now she would know all! The “Thunderer,” “Jupiter,” &c., made its way, of course, to the States, and would be read there. It was only a question of time.

A week dragged on; and in a few days after the arrival of the ship at New York he received a telegram. How his fingers trembled as he opened it!

“Seen a great theatrical agent; says she is not in the States now. There is a Lydia *Elphinstone* at Chicago, who might be the same; shall go and see.”

In a few days came another telegram:—

“Lost the track; she has left Chicago.”

The agent remained nearly a month longer, and did all that he could; then telegraphed to say that he could do no more, and should he return? Some said she was dead—some that she had sunk, and “gone to the bad.” Heaven grant it were so! So he returned. Days and weeks went by; then six—eight months. As with a death, Mr. Benbow began to get over this sorrow. He was slowly, slowly and cautiously, lifting his head, as a man concealed in a ditch, whom the soldiers

were looking for, would do. He was beginning to breathe a little more freely. Perhaps she was dead. She was certain to be dead—decayed or “gone to the bad.” It was time now to begin discounting the advantages: that would not interfere with the discovery, if it must come. But she was gone. She must have seen the news.

Yet the Sword waved on slowly over his head—at dinners or visits—as he rode or travelled; but he now began to think the horsehair must be a very stout one, and would, at least, last his time.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE Duke had a nephew whom he wished to see in Parliament, in order to strengthen that victorious phalanx which gave him such influence.

A borough near Mr. Benbow's place was vacant, and he called on his vassal there to render some service and fealty by doing all he could to help his return. Mr. Benbow—glad of the diversion, eager for something to take up his thoughts—flung himself into the task; intrigued, schemed, burrowed underground, performed prodigies, and at last emerged—as one of his enemies said—chimney-sweep like, after a successful sooty ascent—much besmeared and blackened, but triumphant.

This victory relieved him; but on the day of glory, as he stood on the hustings, the Sword, as it swung slowly, caught the rays of the sun: by its glitter made him look up, and disturbed his speech.

Still, it was a distraction; it took off his thoughts.

Eighteen months had passed away. Mr. Charles and Lady Rosa Benbow were living in town—people of mark. “She was the Duke of Banffshire's daughter, you know”—well off, fashionable, and seeing plenty of people. Another borough was soon to be vacant, and young Mr. Benbow was spoken of as certain to get in. Wonderful Duke! As some one said, he would have a whole battalion of members of his own. Mr. Benbow was being gradually drawn back into his old excitement—the old worldliness. He, indeed, felt a bitter contempt for the creature that could dare attempt to disturb him. But still, spite of all protest, the Sword swung to and fro over his head!

Two years rolled by. Well, now he might smile at his old terrors. These had been something of the “old woman” order.

He was rather ashamed that he should have been diverted from serious matters of business by imagining troubles of this sort. Now there was the seat vacant, for which Charles was to be put forward; but it was a great county—scene for a fearful struggle—a campaign of months.

This was precisely what suited the temper of Mr. Benbow; and he flung himself into the business with a terrific ardour. All that money, strength, trouble, labour could do, he did. He spared himself in nothing. For weeks that pale, spare figure was seen drudging laboriously in that arduous work—soothing, intriguing, threatening, spending, declaiming—in short, going through all the heavy routine which had made *him*—Benbow—what he was. And though the Sword flashed in the air over his head, he had no time, and was too excited, to look much upwards; and, indeed, it began to grow dim and spectral, and gave him very little concern now. The struggle was terrific: it was fought inch by inch. But, finally, young Mr. Charles Benbow was declared “duly elected;” and certainly owed this honour—as it was universally agreed—to the labours of that veteran, painstaking politician, Mr. Benbow, senior.

Wonderful Duke! So dull, and heavy, and “bucolic;” yet still with a certain heavy power. There he was now—the centre of a band of members of Parliament—captain, and a really important person for his party.

Worn out, harassed, exhausted by his labours, Mr. Benbow had resolved to “stay quietly” for that night at the small borough town where the polling had taken place, instead of rushing up to town by the night train, as everybody concerned in the business—with true electoral gratitude—had done. Indeed, nothing is so characteristic as this electoral gratitude—the uneasiness, the unconcealed longing to be free of the place the moment the struggle is over. It is almost indecent; and whereas before, every elector individually is “friend,” and dearest “friend,” when he is no more than part of that abstraction, a crowd—*now*, we are eager to make the dearest and most useful friend as fast as possible into the abstraction of a crowd. This contrast between the period before and after the election is highly curious. Before, we are thus all in the flesh, as it were, determined to make it all brotherly love and affection;

afterwards, æsthetic, and only able to see public motives.

However, here was a lull. There was a calm in the air. He sat by himself in a private room in the Red Lion, thoughtful, *distrait*. For a reaction was coming on him, now that what had so excited him was over. Now his thoughts began to wander back over the course of those two dreadful years, when that terrible secret had hung over his head—that secret which had turned him from being an innocent gentleman and man of the world into what was constructively a criminal. “No;” he said to himself, impatiently; “that was a child’s view; an old woman’s view. As he often said, suppose he *had* interfered to stop the marriage, and brought about all that terrible and shocking scandal—brought disgrace on a noble family, and ruined himself for ever—and, after all, it had turned out that this low creature had sunk into some miserable abyss and died—what a situation that would have been! what a miserable, ridiculous, childish situation! No; all had been for the best. He would exert his powers of mind, and set the whole thing at a distance from him.”

As he thought and reasoned in this fashion, he felt his old buoyancy coming back—his old turn for planning and building; and was presently, trowel in hand, laying courses of “Spanish masonry” for those castles which he was determined to build up to a vast height.

“Ah! they shall find,” he said aloud, “that all this is only the commencement. They don’t know me yet, or what I can do!”

As he spoke, the waiter of the Red Lion came in obsequiously with a letter. Mr. Benbow looked at it impatiently.

“Even at my dinner these hirelings cannot leave me alone. They are impatient for their wages.”

He opened it. There was no letter enclosed: simply a yellow card.

“Solicit my custom,” he thought. “I must pay them in every shape.”

It was not a tradesman’s card. He read—

Theatre Royal, Middleham.

BOX TICKET.

No. 15.

JAMES HOLLAR.

The very name of a theatre always gave him a chill. This present made him start.

"What do they mean?"

Then he remembered. It was only a little attention. Most natural that they should pay it to him, the most public man in the place during these last few weeks.

"They always pay these compliments to others in the profession, and look on me as an actor, too."

So he tossed it aside, and began to read the London papers just brought in.

The ticket lay on the table before him, and his eyes wandered to it occasionally. It seemed like a little stereoscopic slide on which he could make out innumerable pictures of theatrical life. He would turn his eyes away. The waiter came in presently.

"Are you going, sir, please?" he said, hesitatingly, and looking wistfully at the yellow ticket. "Great night to-night, sir—a benefit."

"Take it by all means," said Mr. Benbow; "you like going to the play."

"Oh, sir, thank you. I go whenever I can, but it comes so expensive. To-night I want so to hear 'The Lyons Lady,' sir."

This name made him start. It was very strange, all these chords being thus touched one after the other.

"'The Lady of Lyons,' are they acting that?"

"Oh lord, yes, sir—for this night only. I'm told they've got a splendid *Pawling*, sir."

"There, take it and go," he said, impatiently.

It was very odd. He felt a curious uneasiness and restlessness; and, though he took up his paper, he could not read. He rang the bell.

"Here, bring me the bill of the play. Don't be afraid, I am not going to take back the ticket from you."

But there was no bill in the house. He grew more and more restless. His way was never to sit down under any uncertainty, but to resolve it at once.

He got his hat and walked out. The town was in a bibulous calm—the electors spending a good deal of their "hard-earned money" at the public-houses. He asked the way to the theatre, and found himself presently in front of the building, a new and pretentious one. Boards were hung on the railings. Yes, it was the "immortal Lytton's"—all managers seem to use that description as of course—famous and ever-attractive

play. As usual, it was drawing money here, and the house was full. With a strange nervousness he read, and was vastly relieved when he saw—

"Engagement for one night only of the far-famed *tragedienne*, MISS L. GROSVENOR, who will sustain the *rôle* of Pauline.

"N.B.—The immortal author is stated to have remarked that this tender and womanly impersonation alone came nearest to his IDEAL!"

This made him smile.

"I have been as great a charlatan. I have spoken as much rubbish within the last few days!"

But still he was uneasy. This curious "L." The coincidence was odd. As he had got so far he might go a little farther. He took a ticket and went in.

He was beginning to be very familiar with the play and its situation. Here was the gee-ardener's son again—elderly, broad at the throat—hoarsely proclaiming his love to his mother. The amount of filial affection in plays was wonderful, thought Mr. Benbow. The house was crowded. Some young men were in front of him, and talking eagerly.

"I saw her before she went away," said one; "I am sure it's the same. They say she went to America. She ought to be coming on now."

A film was before Mr. Benbow's eyes. He could not have spoken a word to save his life. He was gazing stupidly on the stage. Suddenly, a roar of applause. Through the film a white, stately figure just made out. He dared not look till he got courage. It was like giving the signal for the guillotine knife to descend.

There! she had spoken. He knew the voice.

CHAPTER XXV.

HE thought he would have fallen. There, it was all over at last. It was idle struggling. It was a wicked, devilish, well-ordered plan, delayed purposely to that moment. There was a spell in her eyes—her voice. His first idea had been to rise and leave the theatre in anger and despair. But he dared not: she seemed to see him—to hold him enchained—to speak all her enchanting speeches *at* him.

Looking at her, as he did, almost with fury, he could not but own the splendour of her charms, which had "ripened," as the phrase

goes, during her absence. She had attained a certain elegance and *chic*—had brought back a refinement and confidence of manner which, with those who travel, has very much the effect of drilling on a recruit. Her voice had grown fuller and more melodious. There was a greater decision in her manner; and local critics thought that there was a want of *tenderness* in her acting, and in her fashion of making and of receiving love. Some even noticed a hardness and a dictatorial strain of command towards the unhappy gee-ardener's son. And even one or two remarked that she kept her eyes directed very much towards one part of the house.

This showed their discrimination more than many other parts of their criticism, and was more supported by fact.

Just before the last act, Mr. Benbow heard the box-door open behind him with the traditional click, and one of the officials of the house placed a card in his hand, on which was written in pencil—

"Please come round to the stage-door at the end of the piece. I wish to speak to you."

Yes; this was quite a new strain—like an order. "I wish to speak to you." What could he do but obey? And when the returned Melnotte had been restored to her affections behind the general officer's plume of feathers, and all had been made straight and made happy, and the curtain had fallen, Mr. Benbow—still under a sort of fascination—went round to the back of the stage. What was he to say to her—what to do? The situation was, indeed, desperate. He could make no struggle, but must ask for the best terms he could. But, after all, what terms could he offer? How could there be "terms" in such a case at all? Still, the only course open to him was to take the common precautions, and be on the defensive. This he did by a sort of instinct.

There she was—sitting enthroned in her dressing-room.

"A long time since we have met, Mr. Benbow. I suppose the most disagreeable person you could ever have hoped to meet."

"You sent for me, Miss Effingham."

"Ah, there was more than that," she said, smiling. "You can't get rid of it in that light way. I was watching you during the play. Never was man more wretched or put out. You think I am come here to disturb your son's new-found happiness—to

take him from his lawful wife. You are afraid the old fancy will revive—eh?"

He looked at her steadily. It was some relief, after all, that she did not know that he knew all.

"Now," she went on quickly, "we must settle on some course of action. Your son has married her without notice to me."

"There was an account of your death in one of the papers," he said, eagerly.

"Yes; put in by some one who had *interest in doing so*. I understood all that. Now, I know that you are in a miserable state as to what will happen. You don't know how I have been treated—what promises were made to me—all I have suffered and put up with. Where is your son?"

She *could* not think of, know anything. The only chance, then, was to follow up that line.

"Listen," he said; "let us talk business. You see this is all most unfortunate. And since that he has treated you badly, will you meet me candidly and fairly, and say what it is that you wish to be done in the way of reparation? Anything you wish, just name it, and I shall exert myself."

"Money, you mean, I suppose? No—I do not want money. I am not one of those who are to be bought off. You mistake my character utterly."

"I never meant such a thing," he said, hastily. "But you see yourself what the situation is. He is married to this lady—"

"Married to that lady!" she repeated. "Oh, indeed! Very well; we assume that."

"He is married to her. It is very cruel, I admit, to you—to whom I know he had given his affections. But still, the question is, what are we to do in this miserable case? Is it not clearly best to do what we can—make the best of the worst? Surely, you are a woman of the world, and must see this. Why could you not stay away, it will do you no good coming here?"

"Now, listen to me, Mr. Benbow, just a few words. I wish to astonish the town—to win name and fame. Why should I not, as well as you, Mr. Benbow? This is what I am determined on; and it entails my going from place to place—from town to town—always towards London. I am resolved that all England shall hear of Lydia Effingham."

"Oh! not by that name, surely!" he cried, in an agony. "He would see you—meet you—learn everything."

"Why not? What relation is there between us that I should skulk in concealment? Rather, why should I do any favour to you, Mr. Benbow? Will you explain *that* to me, as some sort of basis? *Then* we shall understand each other better."

He hung down his head—he could answer nothing. She looked at him with an unconcealed triumph.

"Listen!" she said. "The chief dream of my life has been that I and mine should come back to our own sphere. We wish to be what we were long before—*ladies* again. It is my right, and my talents shall give me back my place. Now, Mr. Benbow, you seem uneasy lest I should disturb this new-found happiness of your son. I can do it, as *you know*—wreck it all, in one second, by raising my finger. Come, I will strike a bargain with you."

"You will?" he said, eagerly.

"Yes. I shall forbear, and shall *engage* to forbear, if you, on your side, engage to do all you can to bring me onward. Lend me all your influence to place me in the best circles—to have me, in short, received *as a lady*. No feints—no half-measures or pretences—excuses to them; but an honest, genuine, *bonâ fide* bringing forward of the actress. If you agree to this, your son shall not see or hear of me for a long, long time. Refuse, and I shall act as I may be advised."

Mr. Benbow gazed at her with a silent, wild expression.

"What do you mean? Do you require that I should give you introduction?"

"Nothing of the kind," she said, scornfully. "I shall speak intelligibly, as you wish it. In fact, it is best for us all to do so. Well, what I demand and claim is this. No patronage—no gracious condescending: 'This is a young person of great merit,' by which you only add to your own complacency. I want nothing of that sort—no compliment—nothing but real, substantial identification of yourself—wholly and heartily—with *my* interests. I have sisters. They must be brought forward too—heartily, and with genuineness. Agree to this, and your son shall never hear of me, and his new-born happiness be never disturbed by me. Of course, I cannot control events, nor him; and if he thrusts himself upon me, I cannot help it. It is no fault of mine. On his own head be it. Will you enter into this arrangement so-

lemnly and seriously? If not—well, things can go on as they are."

"How can I do this?" he said. "Do you mean that you want me to bring you forward as any other lady?"

"Now, understand. Yes—to take me into your house for a few days—not that I want to be there, but for the *prestige* of the thing; to get me to other houses—the Duke's, for instance, who is to have a great gathering shortly."

"I can do nothing of the kind. This is unreasonable. You ask too much."

"Very well. Do as you please. Then the next movement must come from you."

"But it is so strange all this. Why should you *force* a thing of this sort on me, unless for some hatred or malice?"

"Perhaps so. Then I tell you this. Think it over till to-morrow morning. But I am determined on that ultimatum of mine. You must take the actress up as a lady; make her one of your friends—the friend of your friend. Above all, you must see me at the Duke's treated with honour and distinction, like the first lady among them all."

"But Charles will be there," he said, despairingly, "and his wife. How can they meet you?"

"Then let them not meet me. But all that is your concern, not mine. Make up your mind by the morning. If you do not get me to the Duke's—well, perhaps I shall go there unasked."

She arose, and put out her hand; he turned away, and took the road to his hotel. There was no mistaking all this. It seemed to him there was some sort of net drawing round him.

THE LITTLE BRIBINGTON ELECTION.

A READING.

BY LITCHFIELD MOSELEY.

IN 1860, Little Bribington was a small borough in the West of England. We—that is to say, the burgesses thereof—had the privilege of returning one member to Parliament; and, in the year I have mentioned, our honourable representative having levanted with a considerable sum of money—he was a joint-stock bank director—our seat became vacant.

Two candidates immediately appeared: one a man of strict honour and probity, but limited means, named Alexander Freebody;

the other, one Sir Hugh Muffkins, whose merits—well, the less said about them the better, perhaps; suffice it to say, he was the possessor of a very large income. We were not long in discovering that the baronet's political attributes were of a very shady description: in fact, he was so utterly empty-headed, that he had no idea of his own on any subject. But what did that matter to us? We enrolled ourselves under his banner, and he never grumbled at the expenses we incurred on his behalf. Sir Hugh left everything in our hands. We issued his advertisements, indited his posters, and placarded the borough with announcements as follows:—"Purity and Muffkins;" "Corruption and Freebody;" "Muffkins and a Big Loaf" (some of the opposition party altered this into "Muffkins is a Big Loafer"); "Freebody and Starvation;" "Vote for your True and only Friend, Sir Hugh, who pledges himself to abolish Everything;" &c.

We also bought up the local paper, and culminated in it abusive and damaging reports—all of them fabrications—concerning the integrity, morality, and respectability of Mr. Freebody. We secured all the leading taverns, and threw them open to the free and independent electors; and we, moreover, personally canvassed the inhabitants, and left no stone unturned to secure Sir Hugh's return. One of our favourite plans was to prevail on those of the poorer electors who had little to do to act as canvassers and committee men; hinting that all their expenses, up to ten guineas each, would be paid on the day after the election. This bait was eagerly swallowed, and the baronet secured about three hundred plumpers by its means.

I will give one specimen of the way in which we managed our canvassing.

Suppose the scene to be the High-street, Little Bribington. We enter the shop of Mr. White, our leading baker, and find him busy as usual behind the counter.

"Good morning, gentlemen. What can I do for you?" asks the baker.

"Well, it's merely a trifling matter, Mr. White. We suppose we can rely on your support at the coming election for Sir Hugh Muffkins?"

"Well, gentlemen, you see I've half made up my mind to vote for Mr. Freebody. I've known the family for years, and he's just the man we want in Parliament now."

"Hum! yes, Mr. White; but do you conscientiously think that Mr. Freebody is qualified to become our representative? You must recollect that he does not represent vested interests, and—"

"Well, to tell you the truth, gentlemen, I've thought very little about the matter; but, as I said before, I've a great respect for Mr. Freebody."

"Oh, certainly, certainly. This is a free country, and every man has a right to his own opinions; and, of course, we have no wish to interfere with or bias anyone."

Finding that the baker is obstinate, we venture on another tack.

"And how are all your family, Mr. White?"

"Oh, they're pretty well, thank you, gentlemen—pretty well."

"That's right. How's George getting on?"

We may here remark that George has won an unenviable reputation in Little Bribington.

"Ah, not so well as I could wish, gentlemen. You see, George has always been a deal o' trouble to me and the missis, and I'm afraid he'll never settle to anything. It's scarce a month back since I got him a good situation in the North, and he wasn't there a week before he threw it up; and now he's at home, idling about again."

"Dear me, Mr. White, that's very sad—very sad indeed! By the bye, Jellyby"—J. is my companion—"Sir Hugh Muffkins is chairman of one of the largest finance companies in London, and it wouldn't be much trouble to him to get George into the office. What do you think?"

Jellyby nods assent.

"It would be an excellent opening for him, Mr. White. We can't mention the matter to him just now, you see, he's so busy about this election business; but as soon as that's settled, we'll broach the subject, if you like."

"Really, gentlemen, I should feel deeply grateful to you if you would. I can assure you, my son's goings-on have caused me many a sleepless night."

"Well, Mr. White, we'll see what can be done *after* the election. Good morning."

"Good morning, gentlemen, and thank you kindly; and if my vote's worth having, it's at Sir Hugh's disposal."

So, in five hundred different ways, we succeeded in obtaining promises of support from as many electors, in some cases by

open bribes, in others by hinting at future benefits. We held meetings at the town hall; and whenever Sir Hugh essayed to speak, and broke down—which he generally did after the first sentence—we drowned his confusion by cheers; and the next morning the *Bribington Gazette* gave an elaborate account of the proceedings, with a verbatim report of the speech made by the baronet—which was supplied to the paper by a literary barrister we engaged for the purpose. We also secured the active co-operation of a number of London pugilists and roughs; and the duty of these gentlemen was to attend the opposition meetings, and whenever Mr. Freebody or his supporters attempted to speak, they would begin to yell uproariously, upset the benches, throw the ink bottles about, get up a free fight—and, in short, create such a disturbance, that not a single word could be heard; and, as all well-disposed persons considered themselves fortunate if they escaped without broken heads, those who attended Mr. Freebody's meetings once never repeated their visit.

At last the nomination day arrived; and at eleven o'clock Sir Hugh Muffkins, accompanied by his proposer and seconder, drove up to the hustings in a magnificent carriage, drawn by four horses, with postillions—Mr. Freebody having arrived some half-hour earlier in a simple one-horse brougham—amid the prolonged cheers of our lambs, which lasted until the Mayor, who was on our side, opened the proceedings by commanding silence. Whereupon, Mr. Freebody's nominator, Mr. Frumps—a short, fussy little gentleman, of extremely nervous temperament—stepped forward, and spoke as follows:—

"Gentlemen"—(here he looked about him, and fumbled with his watch chain for a few seconds)—"Gentlemen—I am a man of business"—(he had made a fortune in the ginger beer trade)—"and, as you are all, no doubt, men of business yourselves, I will, if you will permit me, come to the point at once, and without any further delay; feeling sure that—a—beating about the bush is a mere waste of time, and simply calculated to try your patience. I will, with your kind permission—"

A Voice: "You said that before."

"Did I? I am obliged to that gentleman for the information; and, therefore, with your kind permission—"

Another Voice: "Get along, do!"

"Gentlemen, I am getting along as fast as circumstances will allow; but, if you will persist in interrupting me—"

Several Voices: "Oh! oh! oh!"

"I am afraid that I shall be compelled to trespass on your time to a greater extent than I at first intended. Gentlemen, I was about to say—"

A Voice: "Never mind what you were about to say. Say it out like a man!"

"Sir, I appeal to you for protection." (Here he turned to the Mayor, who held up his hand, as if to command silence.) "Gentlemen!"—laying a marked stress on the first two syllables—"A vacancy having occurred in your representation, I beg to propose Alexander Freebody, Esq., as a thoroughly fit and proper person to represent your borough in Parliament. I believe him to be—"

Here the speaker was compelled to stop in consequence of a perfect hurricane of groans and catcalls. In vain he attempted to make himself heard, being assailed with cries of "Go home!" "What lunatic asylum have you escaped from?" "Oh! oh!" &c.

Mr. Freebody's seconder followed in dumb show, until he was hit by a stray bunch of turnips, upon which he retired with expedition.

Then, something like silence having been restored, Mr. Spuffins, our chairman, advanced, and, in the usual orthodox manner, proposed Sir Hugh Muffkins amid deafening cheers; and was immediately followed by Mr. Jonathan Gammon, who seconded the nomination in the following eloquent speech. Gammon was a man who positively revelled in big words, without the slightest idea of their meaning or applicability, and was in every respect a shining specimen of the "stump orator" species.

"Gentlemen! Fellow-townsmen! Free and Independent Electors of Little Bribington!—It is with feelings of the most intense gratification that I rise to second the nomination of Sir Hugh Muffkins, feeling convinced, in the innermost recesses of my soul, that, if you are fortunate enough to elect him as your representative in the Commons House of Parliament, you will confer lustre on your borough, and credit on yourselves. Gentlemen, I am not ashamed to state, that there is not a man

living whom I hold in higher estimation than the worthy baronet." (He had just borrowed £500 of him.) "Gentlemen, if you want a man who will pledge himself to do anything, then I say, elect Sir Hugh Muffkins! If you wish the ceaseless cycle of this great empire to expand into infinite infinity, elect Sir Hugh Muffkins! If you want a man who is in favour of the disruption of the tyrannical cords that bind the everlasting feet of industry as with adamant chains, elect Sir Hugh Muffkins! If you require virtue, integrity, honour, probity, justice, naturalization, intimidation, investigation, mystification, obliteration, premeditation, procrastination, vaccination, and the compulsory abolition of all taxation, whether necessary or unnecessary, where would you seek for such a man except in Sir Hugh Muffkins? Gentlemen, I confide to you the proud responsibility of electing him. Remember that a noble task is before you—a task which, upwards of ten thousand years ago, the brave Roman electors strove to emulate, but in vain; yet even in those old barbaric times, when men were men and not serfs, faint traces of the glories of this day were visible on the political horizon—that horizon which, happily, has not yet been burst up by the amenities of chemical jurisprudence. Then, Gentlemen, pull well together, shoulder to shoulder and arm to arm, and hesitate at nothing—I say, nothing whatever; for remember that the eyes of two expansive hemispheres are upon you to-day, to say nothing of those hemispheres yet undiscovered, to secure the triumphant return of Sir Hugh Muffkins!"

As Mr. Gammon resumed his seat, the applause was positively terrific. The show of hands was then taken, and declared to be in favour of the baronet; whereupon Mr. Freebody demanded a poll, which was fixed for the following day.

The next morning we opened the polling booths at eight o'clock. The night before, we telegraphed to London, and received by the first train a reinforcement of some four dozen lambs. We placed our army round the booths, with strict injunctions to indulge in as much horse-play as possible, to annoy and otherwise molest all persons voting for Mr. Freebody, and to carry off the elderly and weak-minded men, and force them to vote for our candidate. These instructions they carried out to the letter,

until the poll closed at four o'clock. One hour later, the returning officer announced the numbers to be as follows—"Muffkins, 1,240; Freebody, 216;" he therefore declared that Sir Hugh Muffkins was duly elected. Then, amid long-continued cheers, we led forward the successful candidate, who delivered a telling speech in the following manner:—

"Gentlemen—I—overpowered—honour—House of Commons—assure you—brightest—" ("Hurrah!" "Bravo!" "Hear, hear!" &c.)—"ever cherish—malt tax—" ("Hear, hear!" "Three cheers for Sir Hugh!")—"British constitution—ardent desire—lasting settlement—dispute—proud prerogative—" ("Hear, hear!")—"your representative—"

This was the entire speech, all the audible words being prompted by Gammon, all the other portions being filled up by the cheers of our lambs. But, as the baronet had thrown his arms about wildly, people said it was a capital oration. Then the bells were set ringing, the crowd dispersed, and the election was over; but not, however, until the irrepressible Gammon had thus spoken:—

"Electors of Little Bribington—I long to grasp your hands in cordial recognition of your disinterested conduct on this occasion; for I believe, to speak figuratively, that the first brick of the national palladium of a glorious liberty, to be built on the wreck of a ruined constitution, has been laid to-day. Gentlemen, I can fancy how the grovelling toadies who lick up the dust which a bloated oligarchy has the audacity to kick up with its garments—I can fancy, I say, how these men will tremble and shiver in their boots when the glorious fact is made known to them in the 'Latest Intelligence' that Sir Hugh Muffkins sits for Little Bribington. Gentlemen, the mists and shrouds of a darkening ignorance are rapidly disappearing, and ere long the dazzling dawn of a new era will make itself heard on every side. Again and again I thank you, and call upon you to give three ringing cheers for Sir Hugh Muffkins, M.P.

"Muffkins is everything that we desire—

A man of gold, whom all men must admire.

Gold rules the world: Muffkins was born to rule.

Who scoffs at money bags must be a fool!"

He was the last member we ever returned; for, three months later, Little Bribington was disfranchised.

THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK IV.—CHAPTER I.

ERLE MAKES A DISCOVERY.

"OUGHT I to love her?" said Erle to himself as he walked slowly along in the soft air of the summer night, under the dark branches of the elms in the great avenue at Madingley Chase. "Ought I to love her? Loving her, ought I to tell my love? Should I not rather hide it from her—from all the world—and smother it within my own breast? What right have I—nameless and unworthy—to win the affections of one so pure, so innocent, so trusting? And what can I offer her? Sixpence for a settlement, and a name—that I at least have done nothing to dishonour!" And brushing the heavy dew from the grass, and startling the sheep from under the trees as he came upon them in his path, he strode along towards the house. The gray stone buildings lay bathed in the bright moonlight. As he turned out of the avenue, the house suddenly burst into view: the house that had been his home for nearly two years now; in which he had met with the greatest possible consideration and kindness from all the inmates, from his first entrance into the family. Affection now would be the most appropriate term for the regard in which the young secretary was held by Sir Harold and his sister. Mabel Despencer, too, was one of the Baronet's family, as of old—and was Mabel Despencer still.

On Erle's first introduction to the family at the Chase, by Campbell, he had made a very favourable impression upon them all. There was no man for whose opinion and character Sir Harold had a higher respect and regard than he had for Mr. Campbell's. To him he had entrusted the education of the wild and wayward Malton, his ward. To that charge he had afterwards added that of training his nephew Charles, in whom, as the probable successor to his title and estates, he took no common interest. Without a son of his own upon whom to lavish the affection of his generous nature, Sir Harold had always been inclined to regard Charles Mortimer more as a son than a nephew. For every reasonable wish and want of Charles's he had always been

only too willing to provide; and when the young man's pursuits and radical incapacity for showing anything like the form of character his uncle admired were taken into consideration, their relations were quite as friendly as could be expected.

Malton, also, had strayed from the path of sober honour his noble old guardian would have seen him tread, and strayed farther than Charles therefrom; having had, after the day of his majority, the command of a fortune small enough to be easily squandered by a course of spendthrift prodigality; but large enough, for the time, to permit his indulgence in a career of the most princely extravagance. For the young Duke of Fairholme was a man who never in his life calculated the cost of any whim he proposed to gratify. If there were money in the bank, he spent it with reckless profuseness. If there were none, it could always be raised. In a place like London, boasting the possession of so many enterprising and liberal men, it were hard indeed if a Duke wanted a single hour for a few contemptible thousands—so long as his property was moderately free from encumbrance. So Fairholme always found it until the day of reckoning came. And ruin descended at last like an avalanche, burying him under the ashes of fortune, and honour, and fair fame.

The interval of two years had made little difference in the appearance or habits of Miss Margaret. She was still prim and erect in her bearing, spending her time with her brother Harold, in doing all that lay in her power to alleviate his distress under the heavy affliction he was called upon to endure. His sight was so very bad, that he was almost blind; and although he had been entreated by some of his friends, and advised by the medical men whom from time to time he had consulted to have his eyes operated upon, he had, up to the present time, refused to submit his ailment to the skill of the best surgeons. In his secretary, he had found the very man he wanted in his infirmity: a person capable of managing his business affairs for him, and of taking that active part in the direction and management of his estate, that he himself was unable to do. He found in Reginald Erle a young man of great ability and tact; and he entrusted his affairs to him almost entirely, having, with good reason, the greatest confidence in his integrity and ca-

capacity. Despite his almost blind condition, the old Baronet still took an interest of the keenest description in his stud. And he was never more thoroughly happy and genial than when he was being driven by Reginald Erle, in a low carriage that had been constructed for him so that he might get in and out without trouble, over to Malton Downs, to hear old Johnny Butler talk about Fairholme's horses in training for their engagements, or in fancy "fight their old battles" over again.

Sir Harold had a great regard for the old trainer, who was of his own age exactly—they were both born on the same day—and would rally him pleasantly about being so much the better man of the two.

Mabel Despencer, as we have said, was still resident at the Chase. We have not attempted to give a description of this young lady's charms. Let it be enough for us now to say that Miss Despencer was above the middle height, possessed a figure whose outline was perfection and whose movement grace. Long auburn tresses, which, when released from their jealous plaits, flowed in a golden-tinted stream below her shapely waist; eyebrows arched, and in colour almost black; dark, lustrous brown eyes, that, did they sparkle with mischief or melt in tenderness, alike bewitched, entranced, and charmed with their matchless spell; a complexion like the lily in its virgin purity, and so transparent, that each lovely blush showed on her neck and bosom like the rosy tints of early dawn; while her lips in contrast robbed the coral of its hue. And to these attractions were added an amiability and goodness of heart more common among English girls than such rare beauty—a beauty of expression, of voice, of manner indescribable, and not to be described. In a word, reader, if you have imagination, you can fill up the picture, and Mabel Despencer stands before you; if not, the writer of this history can give you no further help. But, as has been seen, this prize was not esteemed at its worth by the man who was invited to step in and win it. For Charles Mortimer, others had greater charms. Erle, however, had gazed with admiration upon this lovely girl, and she had been pleased to confer upon him the honour of her friendship.

He had walked from the village of Madingley, which lay about a mile and a half to the south-west of the Chase. He had

spent his evening at the rectory—a pretty brown stone cottage, covered with monthly roses that bloomed from June often until November. The rector of Madingley was the Rev. Hugh Mildmay, who had been an old friend of Sir Harold in his younger days, and had given up a college fellowship, married, and settled quietly in the little Berkshire village, in which his friend was both lord of the manor and patron of the living; owning, besides, every house and hovel that stood there.

Erle was in the habit of spending an evening at the rectory pretty frequently; and there was no man with whom he was fonder of smoking a pipe than with the before-mentioned Rev. Hugh Mildmay.

On his way back to the Chase, his thoughts, as we have seen, were rather melancholy than gay; and finding that the family at the Chase—who, when they had no visitors, kept quite patriarchal hours—were all gone to bed, he declined any refreshment at the hands of the butler who was sitting up for him, and at once retired to his own chamber. Here, in keeping with his old Tudor habit, he threw open his window, and gazed out into the park, beautiful in the flitting and changing light and shadow of a moonlight night, whose brightness was often overcast by white, fleecy clouds.

Here he still pursued his reverie, communing with his own heart, and repeating to himself that question he had put several times during his walk home from the rectory. "Ought I to love her?" and finding no very satisfactory answer to his queries.

"Ought I to love her? I, who can offer her no suitable match! I, who am nameless and unworthy of her; who have only a present sufficiency, and the hope of rising in a profession in which the prizes are many and rich, but exceedingly hard to grasp—at least, on the brighter side of fifty! Ought I not rather—if this be love I feel agitating my breast—to nip it in the bud, and crush it with ruthless hand, at once and for ever!"

And presently the answer—dictated by his high feeling of honour—was that he ought not to love her. And who was it with whom he fancied himself to be in love? Not Mabel Despencer, but Beatrice Mildmay, the clergyman's child.

He had met her often: over and over again at the Chase, when she came tripping over the park to visit Miss Margaret and

Mabel, often on some pretty errand of charity, and had remained to luncheon or to five o'clock tea; at other times, when she had come with father to dinner after evening service—it was over at four—on a Sunday, and on a host of other occasions, until at last he fancied himself in love with the delicate and fragile maiden, Beatrice Mildmay. And we know that, if Beatrice had ever asked the question of her own fluttering little heart, the answer must have been, beyond a doubt, that she was very much in love with Sir Harold's handsome secretary and companion. And Reginald Erle had put the question to himself, making it not a matter of feeling or passion, but of honour. He knew his own history and his own position. Beatrice did not. And he prepared himself to act nobly, in accordance with the sentiment—"It is not, dearest, that I love thee less, but that I love honour more," which was then and ever present in his mind.

Having examined so far into the state of his heart's affections, he consigned himself to his bed. There was one question he had not asked himself concerning his relations with Beatrice Mildmay. He had asked his honour, "Ought I to love her?" He had not inquired of his heart, "Do I love her?" And between the questions there is, as every lover knows, a very material difference.

The next morning, after breakfast, Erle was as usual engaged for some time in the library with Sir Harold. There were letters to be read and answered, applications of assiduous secretaries in London and the country to be attended to. Sir Harold had that great misfortune, the reputation of being a charitable man; and requests for subscriptions for every impossible object poured in upon him—from supplying comforters to the natives of Dorrian Gha, with fringes and tassels complete, to furnishing a living stream of Evangelical ministration to the benighted inhabitants of the Cannibal Islands. In addition to such business as this, there were various matters relating to the management of the estate to be gone into, orders to be given, commissions entrusted to various persons about the place.

The state of the old Baronet's sight was such that, although he could manage to see his way about the house, or walk without the assistance of a supporting arm in the grounds and shrubberies adjacent, he was unable

either to read or write for himself; and it was, therefore, the custom either for Reginald Erle or his ward Mabel to read such news from the day's papers as it was thought would be interesting to him.

The papers at the Chase were always a day behind the times at least—the *Morning Post* of Monday being read to Sir Harold on Tuesday morning, and so on. Mabel Despensers would seat herself, in her light morning dress, on a stool at her guardian's feet, and read to him the fashionable news, and such parts of the paper as interested herself and Miss Margaret, before they left the breakfast-room. In the study or the library afterwards, Erle would take up the *Times*, and commence with the Money article, going on to the reports of the last races at Doncaster or Newmarket, or wherever the national sport was going on, always finishing his share of the reading duty by giving Sir Harold full details of the latest betting at Tattersall's and the clubs.

On the morning in question, there was a letter from Mr. Robert Mortimer—not dated, as usual—from Grosvenor-square, but bearing the ponderous official seal of the Pink Tape Office. He informed his brother of various matters of family interest, and closed his epistle by saying that his son Charles was then staying a few days with them in London, and would shortly pay his respects to his uncle at Madingley Chase. The head-quarters of Charles Mortimer's regiment were still at Bloombridge; but the company to which he was attached had, some eighteen months previously, been deputed to Scotland.

At Edinburgh he had, consequently, resided; and his visits, of course, were only on such occasions as he got leave of absence—a matter he never found very difficult of achievement.

After all their usual routine of business had been despatched, Erle was requested by Sir Harold to go down to the village—or, more properly, town—of Malton, and see the steward on a matter of business that required personal explanation.

The stewardship of the Mortimer property had been in the hands of the same family, from father to son, for a great many years; and, as Sir Harold was a great respecter of all hereditary rights, there was little danger of any change being made in his time. Though it was patent to all observers, and was not hidden from the Ba-

ronet himself, that this hereditary qualification was almost the only one that Mr. Nathaniel Johnson possessed for the management of a landed or any other estate.

He had succeeded his father in the stewardship in a natural and proper manner, when Mr. Nathaniel Johnson, the elder, became childish and paralytic. The old gentleman was still alive and flourishing, and, his son being a bachelor, they all lived together in a substantial and comfortable house belonging to their employer, and pleasantly situate in the High-street of the little town of Malton, which was about as far from the village of Madingley as Madingley was from the Chase.

The Messieurs Johnson were now commonly distinguished by the residents of Malton as "Old Nat" and "Young Nat;" though Sir Harold had often told Erle, with a smile, when they drove in the pony-chaise down to the steward's house, that in his own young days he recollected three Johnsons all being together there, and then recognized by the appellations of "Old Nat," "Young Nat," and "Young Nat's Son." The "Old Nat" of that time had been gathered to his fathers in the fulness of years and honour. "Young Nat" was now "Old Nat," and, by a natural process, "Young Nat's Son" became "Young Nat." Unhappily, none of the fair spinsters of Malton had been able to make any mark upon the affections of Mr. Nathaniel Johnson the younger; and, as he was now in his fifty-fifth year, if the direct line of the Johnsons were to be perpetuated, and the Mortimer stewardship kept in the family, it was high time "Young Nat" took the proper steps for securing a successor.

When Erle entered the sitting-room of the Johnsons, father and son, he found Old Nat comfortably seated, with his long pipe and tankard of home-brewed in a quaint old silver cup, won in his young days at a ploughing-match. The old gentleman filled a very large chair to overflowing; his tobacco-jar and ale stood on a little round table of old-fashioned make beside him. His son, the steward, was out.

"Good mornin', sir," said the old gentleman; "fine weather for the hay."

Old Nat was too deaf to hear what was said to him or what he said himself. He always made a remark about the weather, connecting it in a mysterious and unaccountable manner, at all seasons of the

year, with hay. With old Mr. Johnson, "Fine weather for hay, sir;" or "Queer weather for hay," meant no more than that it was wet or fine at the time he made the remark, and had no reference whatever to the seasonableness or otherwise of the crop in question. In a certain sense it was hay-time with Old Nat all the year round.

"Have a glass of my son's ale, Mr.—Mr. Erle, sir," said the old gentleman, his head nodding and shaking all the while. "I'll pull the bell for the gal, sir."

The bell-rope was close to the old gentleman's hand, and he gave it a tug which soon brought a neat maid to inquire what was wanted by her old master. Mr. Johnson simply pointed to the tankard. The maid soon returned with a large and handsome horn, lined with silver, and filled with cold and bright ale from the cellar.

"Drink it up, sir," said Old Nat, "that ain't stuff as 'll hurt you. I drink a good many o' them tots in a day."

Erle drank some of his ale, and put his horn drinking-cup on the table. He knew it was quite useless to talk to the old gentleman, his entertainer, as he could not possibly be made to hear what was said.

"We're got company," said old Nat, shaking all the while, and filling his glass—"we're got company a-staying with us. I used to be fond of company when I were a lad, but I don't care much about it now."

Erle nodded, to intimate to Mr. Johnson that he followed his remarks. Presently the sound of horses' hoofs was heard in the yard, and, looking out of the window, Erle saw Mr. Johnson the younger, accompanied by a stout gentleman in a surtout coat, coming towards the house.

"Ah! Good morning, sir, good morning, Mr. Erle. I am glad to see you've got some ale. You find my father but dull company, I'm afraid."

"We always get along very well together," said Erle, in reply.

"Let me introduce my friend Mr. Grobey of the Stock Exchange."

"Oh," said Erle, "I think I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Grobey before, at his brother's."

"You have, sir," said Mr. Horatio Grobey, in his rotund voice; "a very pleasant evening we spent, if you recollect."

"Very fine weather for hay, sir," said Old Nat, shaking in the direction of Mr. Grobey.

"You are making a stay in the country for your health, I suppose, Mr. Grobey?" said Erle.

"Well, Mr. Erle, I am and I am not. I am doing a thing which, I am happy to say, is not uncommon in this great commercial age, when time, sir, is money."

"What is that?"

"I am killing two birds with one stone. While I enjoy the hospitality of my friend Johnson, I manage to transact business of importance as well."

"Some scheme for the amelioration of the condition of our great capitalists, Mr. Grobey?" said Erle, laughing.

"No, sir. I am here as agent—the financial and confidential agent of his Grace, the Duke of Fairholme."

"Indeed!" said Erle, entertaining a feeling of regret that the Duke should be in such hands.

"I told his Grace," continued Mr. Grobey, magniloquently, "that I would just run down and look over the—ha—Malton property; just cast the eye of a business man over it, and see where there is a screw loose, with a view to tightening that screw. The bucolic population possess a remarkable immunity from all commercial principles, sir. Rents, sir, ought to be raised in proportion to the financial prosperity of the country."

"What do you say to that, Mr. Johnson?" asked Erle of Sir Harold's steward.

"We never raise our rents, do we, Mr. Erle?" said Mr. Johnson, with a significant look intended to convey his opinion of such mean proceedings.

"Ah, well," Mr. Grobey remarked, nothing daunted, "when Sir Harold—a most worthy and estimable old gentleman—is translated to another sphere of existence, changes may take place even at the Chase. I believe your rents are about one-half what they ought to be; and that, you see, is an injustice to other landlords, who want to get a fair return from their estates: the Duke, for instance. But, as I have often had occasion to say to him, land is no investment."

Erle made some inquiries after the health of Mr. Grobey's brother Robert, Mr. Peter Odger, and others of their common acquaintance; and then transacted his business with the steward.

When he took his leave, Mr. Johnson gave him a letter from Lady Berkhamstead for Miss Margaret, and also begged that he would honour them with his company some

evening during Mr. Horatio Grobey's stay at Malton.

"My duty and best 'spects to Sir Har'ld," the old gentleman quavered out from his easy chair, as Erle was going out of the room. A ceremonious message to his old patron, Mr. Johnson the elder never omitted to send on every opportunity that occurred.

On his return to the Chase, Erle found Sir Harold taking the air on the terrace with his sister and Miss Despencer.

"I have a letter for you, Miss Mortimer," he said, as he approached the garden bench on which they were seated.

"Indeed, Mr. Erle; and pray from whom?"

"Lady Berkhamstead, I believe," returned Reginald. "Mr. Johnson told me it had been given to him to forward, and he asked me to take it."

"Oh, then, let us see what it is," said Miss Margaret, breaking the seal, and letting the envelope drop on the gravel path at her feet.

"What do you say to this, Harold?" she said, when she had read her ladyship's little pink note. "You know what a curiosity hunter and patron of the arts she is. She proposes to send a collection of their enamels and miniatures to that wonderful toy-shop at South Kensington, and wants me to ask you to add what few we have got of any interest to her cabinet. What do you say, brother? I suppose there is no reason why we should not do so?"

Sir Harold expressed his entire acquiescence in his sister's proposition.

"Come then, Mabel; you and I will go and have a hunt after the portraits and things we think are worth sending; and then we will ask Mr. Erle to oblige us by making a catalogue for us in his clear hand, and they shall be packed up and sent to Lady Berkhamstead this evening."

And Miss Margaret, accompanied by Mabel, strolled cheerily off on her errand.

It was in the afternoon, after luncheon, that Erle was called upon to give his assistance in making a list of the objects of art Miss Margaret had determined upon sending. There were about thirty in all. An old and curious watch that struck the hours and quarters, a foreign chatelaine, some curious little carvings in ivory of Chinese workmanship, and a number of miniatures on ivory, chiefly family portraits.

It was no difficult task to make a cata-

logue of them; and Erle rapidly, and to the complete satisfaction of the two ladies, got through his share of the work.

When he took one of the last portraits in his hand, his attention was instantly riveted on the picture.

It was a face he knew well. His cheek flushed, he turned pale, his heart beat fast. Commanding himself as well as he was able, he finished his catalogue of the different objects of vertu for the exhibition.

Miss Margaret and Mabel were gone. He ran to his own room, unlocked a drawer in breathless haste, unfolded a paper—took from it the miniature of the officer Father Francis had years ago placed round his neck.

He ran back to the library—to the cabinet—placed the two portraits side by side.

They were identical in all respects.

Portraits of the same person done by the hand of the same artist.

“What discovery have I made?” he exclaimed. “Whose likeness is this my mother wore? What am I to think? What new light is this?”

SPRING.

UP from the glowing South—with azure eyes,
All sleepy with the flash of brilliant dyes
Of ruby-tinted bird, gleam-painted butterflies,
Gold-paven shore and lily-crested river,
Where gilded insects 'mongst lush emerald quiver,
And all the perfumes of spice islands breathe,
And silver webs the waves round rocks of coral
wreath.

All gathered in the meshes of her rainbow net,
The gorgeous hues with dimmer pearls beset
She flings before her. Like to reed-tuned note,
Such as from shepherd's pipe o'er some lone mere
may float,

So sounds the soft wind-whisper of her voice—
“Coming! O dull, dead earth arise! rejoice!
The Easter of the year is come—wake up to life!”

The challenge rings far to the snow-bound North;
The Ice-King trembles—“Up, ye warriors—forth!
Hear ye the swift-winged chargers cleave the air?
An army comes!” Nay, but a maiden fair
Smiles on the Winter-King in his despair;
And he his death-fraught sceptre throwing down,
Kisses her outstretched hand, and yields his crown.
And through the mountain gorges sounds her voice—
“Coming! O death-chained waters—live! rejoice!
The Easter of the year is come—wake up to life!”

A liquid murmur, like the west-wind stroke
Of Eolus on silver lute-strings, broke
The silence; then a cadence wild and sharp,
Like to mad, fitful chords on untuned harp;
And with a passionate and thundering roar,
From thousand rocks the swelling waters pour—
Till, tuned to melody, they sweep along,
And in the smiling vales lift up their Easter song.

Awake, ye buds and blossoms! Perfume sweet
Steals through the air, her dainty steps to greet.
Bursts forth the dappled bloom from orchards gay.
Earth's primrose stars shine out. The clustering

May
Frosts o'er the green-grown hedge with sudden
white—

Pure Easter-garb after the long death-night.

Lo! at her voice fair Nature bursts the tomb,
And rises glorious in fresh beauty's bloom.
Type of a fairer spring-time yet to be,
When mortal shall wake up to immortality.

“O, all ye living ones, lift up your voice—
Coming! O dull, dead hearts arise! rejoice!
The Easter of the year is come—wake up to life.”

AN OLD HOTEL BILL.

I WONDER if one could write a man's history if there remained no record of him beyond his bills? I cannot help thinking that if such a one's bills—receipted or not—for the last quarter of a century were placed before me, I could make a very good guess as to his life; just in the same way as Professor Huxley, on merely seeing one bone, is said to be able to construct the entire animal, antediluvian or otherwise. Certainly, nobody could make more of me than that I was an average Englishman—perhaps I might say a very average Englishman—if they were to take the trouble to analyze this pile of old bills that is lying before me now. They are all old hotel bills, pleasant records—being all paid—of happy sojourns in sunny climes; peaceful memories they bring back of careless holidays and well-earned recreation, and I would not put them in the fire or consign them to the waste-paper basket on any account.

Look at this bill, for instance. Champagne and *diners à part* figure largely in it. The operation of changing more than one circular note had to be performed before that reckoning could be discharged. I remember it well. Here, again, is another—a perfect contrast. The Sybarite appears, by the items, to have been converted into a hermit. The former bill was incurred at an hotel in my first long vacation, after I had successfully passed the intellectual snares and pitfalls of my little-go. Oh! how fearfully I should be plucked if I were to try to pass such an examination now! The latter represents my mode of living with a *real* reading party in Normandy. We all worked hard—there can be no mistake about that. The pension, I see, was five francs a day; and the wine account must

have been considered contemptible by mine host. Here is another batch of a subsequent date. Ah! this was when I was on my honeymoon. The Paris bill is unquestionably heavy; but after that they grow lighter—much lighter. Paying for two, it appears, is a very different thing from paying for one. Here is one, merely a slight reckoning at an inn upon a mountain-pass in Switzerland. Ah! but as I look at it more attentively, I remember that thereby hangs a tale—a somewhat romantic tale; and it is briefly this.

Five and twenty years ago, my wife and I were crossing over into Italy. After we had been slowly ascending for some time, we got out of the carriage, thinking we should get on quite as fast, and, perhaps, more pleasantly, on foot; and by taking short cuts across the zigzags we soon got far ahead of our conveyance. I had been over this same pass twice or thrice before, when a happy—I mean an unhappy—bachelor, and I remembered the by-paths pretty well; and we soon were in sight of the inn where we intended to pass the night, not very far from the summit of the pass. As we toiled on, we overtook a gentleman, apparently an Englishman, and a little boy. I believe that—feeling pretty sure, from the general appearance of the man, that we were compatriots—I said something or other to him, remarked that it was a fine evening, or that the scenery was very grand—I forget what. He, however, made some monosyllabic reply, and did not appear inclined to fraternize; and so we passed on. Still, I took a hasty note of him. He was a man, apparently, of some eight and twenty or thirty years of age, of a delicate frame, and almost feminine countenance. One thing I particularly noticed—he had a slight but peculiar red mark under the left eye, what Box or Cox might have called a strawberry mark. The boy with him, a child of not more than six years old, was evidently his son, for both I and my wife traced a very strong resemblance between the pair; and the little fellow looked very pale and tired as his father dragged him slowly up the steep ascent. We soon left them far behind, and my wife remarked that it was a curious circumstance that these two should be thus going over the pass; for we had seen no other carriage on the road which could belong to them, and she naturally thought it very hard that

such a young child should be forced to make so tedious a journey upon foot. However, when we arrived at our destination, we thought no more of them; and, after a pleasant and appetizing supper, in which certain red trout—I read them now in the bill—formed no unimportant item, we strolled out again, and watched the white glories of the rising moon spreading over the highland valley in which we were. When we entered the hotel again, and went into the *salle-à-manger* for some coffee, we discovered the younger of our fellow-toilers, sitting meekly by himself in a corner of the room. A table was spread for supper before him, and he was evidently patiently awaiting the arrival of his father.

His large blue eyes looked tired and sad; his golden curls hung tangled over his shoulders; no tender hand had cared for him after his weary walk; and I saw the tears standing in my wife's eyes as she whispered to me, "He has no mother to take care of him." This, I thought, was a hasty conclusion to arrive at; and I said so. My wife—wiser than I, I suppose—shook her head and entirely disagreed with me.

We lingered over our coffee for some time longer than necessary. The patient child sat silent in the dark corner; now and then the blue eyes wandered inquiringly towards the door, but found no answer there. An hour passed away; but his father—if the man we had seen was his father, and of this we had no doubt—never came.

"I can't stand this, John," said Laura to me, indignantly. "If somebody doesn't give that poor child his supper, I'll give it him myself."

I remonstrated mildly—"I don't think we have any right to interfere, my dear. No doubt his father is taking a nap upstairs, and he will wake up and be down directly."

"Nap, indeed!" retorted Laura, rather savagely. Indeed, I had no idea till then my sweet bride could be so savage if she chose. "Nap, indeed! with that darling starving in uncomplaining silence! I've half a mind to ask which is his room, and give him a rousing he won't easily forget."

This, I thought, would be a highly improper proceeding upon Laura's part; and I ventured to say so. She contented herself with repeating, with greater vehemence than before, "Nap, indeed!"

At that moment we heard the heavy sound

of the diligence, and the gay jingling of the horses' bells, as it stopped at the door of the hotel. Cold and muffled passengers—for we were some seven or eight thousand feet above the level of the sea—came into the room, and partook of various drinks; but they soon cleared out again. The horses had been changed; and, with a great smacking of whips and loud pealing of bells, the huge diligence pursued its road to Italy.

The pale-faced, golden-haired child still sat quietly in the dark corner. Once or twice the tired head sank upon the little shoulder, and for a moment or two he dropped asleep. Then he would wake up again and stare at the unkind door which, at every opening, brought him no relief.

After the diligence had been gone some twenty minutes, and Laura had got into a state of fidgets which threatened to pass all control, the landlord and head waiter came into the room, looked at the little boy, then talked together volubly, in a whisper, looked at the boy again, and shook their heads in a mysterious manner. Then the landlord advanced straight to where we were sitting.

"A thousand pardons for asking the question; but do Monsieur and Madame know anything of the little gentleman yonder?"

"No, nothing; beyond that Monsieur and Madame passed the little gentleman and his father as they ascended the pass."

"Is Monsieur aware that the father is an Englishman?"

Well, Monsieur had guessed as much, but could not say more.

"Well, it is very strange. It is some time now since these two arrived. The father engaged a room, and ordered a supper. The father had said that his luggage would be deposited by the diligence; but the diligence had come and gone, and, though particular inquiries were made, the conducteur was quite sure there was no luggage such as had been described to be deposited at this hotel."

"There must have been some mistake," I replied.

"Not possible. The authorities are very particular in these cases. And where is Monsieur le père?"

"Gone to sleep in his chamber, probably," I suggested.

"But not at all! It is empty. There is nothing whatever in it. In fact, the gentleman was seen to leave the hotel the moment

after he had ordered supper and given instructions about his baggage, and had not returned."

Laura was watching the uncomplaining child. The large blue eyes were directed towards us, as if guessing that he was the object of our conversation. She could not restrain herself any longer; and she rose from her seat, and went up to the child. He shrank a little, I thought, as she approached; but there was something about her face which speedily reassured him.

"You are a little English boy, are you not?" she said, as she sat down beside him.

He murmured, "Yes." But I could see a working in the little white throat; the poor, tired mannikin was striving bravely to keep down his tears.

"You want your supper, do you not?" asked Laura, as with one hand she stroked the golden curls. "You are very tired, and ought to have your supper and go to bed. Where is papa? Was not that your papa who brought you here?"

"Yes, my papa brought me here; and he said we were to have something to eat; and I was to wait here quietly till he came back. Very quietly, he told me, and he should soon be back."

"Would not you like to have your supper at once?" said Laura. "Your papa is taking a longer walk than he intended, and he will be very sorry that you should be so hungry. Shall I ask that gentleman," pointing to the landlord, who had come up to the table, "to bring you something to eat at once?"

"No, thank you; I must wait for my papa."

Entreaties and coaxing were all in vain; and Laura, fearful of distressing him still more, left him alone, and resumed her seat by me.

Nearly another hour passed away. Laura insisted on remaining in the room, and we listlessly studied the *Livre des Etrangers*.

By and by the silence of the dark corner was broken. The courage of the gallant little mite had given way: he was sobbing as if his heart would break. Laura had him in her arms in a moment.

"Oh, papa! papa!" he cried, in his bitter agony. "Oh, papa! how could you leave me so long alone! Oh, papa! come back—come back!"

Above his low, sad wail, I heard the

sound of persons entering the hotel, and then there was a busy hum of voices ; and a minute or two afterwards the landlord, with a strange expression in his face, looked in at the door, and beckoned to me. I hastily left the room. There, at the entrance of the hotel, I found the waiters and other people gathered. Three peasants had just come in, bringing with them something they had found—something which lay in a disfigured heap upon the ground.

They had found this body of a man, I was quickly told, at the bottom of a low cliff about a quarter of a mile from the hotel. Then they uncovered the face, and I at once recognized the man Laura and I had passed on the ascent. Then, as a cold shiver came over me, I heard a cry from within the room I had left.

"My papa has come back—I know he has!" and, before any of us could interfere, the door of the *salle-à-manger* was thrown open, and the pallid, weeping child tottered out, followed hastily by Laura.

"Where is papa? I know he is here!" And, checking his violent sobs, he looked eagerly at the solemn faces around him.

"Why won't you tell me where papa is? Oh! what's that upon the floor?" Then, before anyone could stop him, he cast himself down, and laid his cheek by the cold, white lips that never more could kiss him, or breathe a word of love into his ear.

Gentle hands raised him softly, and bore him away to the room the dead man had had prepared, and laid him down upon the bed. He seemed to know his own utter desolation, and the paroxysm of grief was strangely stilled. Laura remained with him all night ; and, when the first red lights of the rising sun bathed with deep splendour the silent glaciers and the snowy peaks, the young heart had broken beneath its burden, and the weary spirit fled away.

Shortly afterwards—at Milan, I think it was—I saw a copy of the *Times*, and in the second column I saw an advertisement for a man with a red mark under his left eye ; and when I returned to England I learned the whole story. This man, who had ever borne the highest character, had got into deep distress, owing principally to the shameful conduct of a friend for whom he had become surety ; and in an evil moment he had fallen, and had forged a cheque for a considerable amount, intending—as such unhappy men always do intend

—to replace the money. He failed in doing this, and, conscious that his fraud must infallibly be discovered, he fled from England, taking with him his motherless child. Whether, in a fit of despair, he had thrown himself from the cliff, or whether he had simply missed his footing, it is impossible to say. Father and son rest in one grave in a churchyard on that mountain height ; and, on every anniversary of the awful tragedy, the good peasants place wreaths of immortelles upon the simple white cross that marks the nameless tomb.

POST-HORSES.—PART I.

AND we must not forget the post-boys—old "boys," wearing, for the most part, scarlet jackets and big boots, and having brown, weather-beaten faces, stunted figures, and legs somewhat bowed. The legend is still painted in black letters upon the stable wall of village inns—"Licensed to let post-horses;" but the days are gone when people posted up to town. The iron horses puff and snort along the iron road ; coaches are out and railways in. Nevertheless, let us post up to town to-night.

We are young again, and the day is young too ; the morning air fresh, dew-drops still hang upon the grass, and border the dusty road as with a fringe of diamonds ; the world is not long awake ; the labourers at work in the fields are not yet weary of their toil ; and, as the horses drag the plough through the stiff land, the newly turned-up earth gives out a pleasant smell. By and by, the hot noon overtakes us, and glares down upon the white road fiercely. Climbing the hills at a foot-pace, the muttered bass or sharp whining treble of wayside beggars mingles with the drowsy sound of wheels. On the hot air the dust floats through the open window ; the stoppage at the half-way house is a relief to all concerned. We have luncheon in the quiet country inn, where the landlord waits on us himself, and where the mutton chops are full of gravy, and the potatoes mealy—the potatoes always *were* mealy in the old posting days—and there was a flavour about the apple tart and custard that followed close upon the chops which tarts have quite lost now. The best parlour is cool and shady ; over the horse-hair sofa there hangs upon the wall a picture of the Duchess of Kent and the young Princess Victoria, more than

half the picture taken up by the huge, curling feather in the Princess's hat. There is a portrait of George IV., too, and one of the Princess Charlotte. When we start again, the sun—like an unwearied traveller who has gained upon us, passed us, and gone on before—is somewhat lower, the air is cooler, and the shadows lengthen. Workmen, carrying tools upon their shoulders and walking leisurely, pause to look after us; children, released from school, shout, waving their caps; women, with babies in their arms and older little ones clinging to their skirts, stand in the cottage doorways. There are fresh horses to the carriage, and another post-boy. There really is some slight difference between these horses and the last; but between the "boys"—none. The idea suggests itself that all post-boys are one and the same—a ubiquitous "boy," for ever at work upon the road. In the chariot—most luxurious of vehicles, whose so easy rocking motion lures one, whether waking or sleeping, into the land of dreams—sitting behind the scarlet back, we have thereof a good view, as the rider jogs up and down before us, rising and falling in the saddle monotonously, ever and anon laying his whip across the shoulder of the off-horse. Later, when eyes wax heavy and heads begin to nod, and the evening shadows deepen, the post-boy—rising and falling still, always right opposite, always monotonous—seems, as his figure stands out against the sky, to be a phantom post-boy, riding phantom horses in the clouds. By and by, twilight comes on; the elm trees in the hedgerows—trees that have been divested of their lower branches, and have grown into strange shapes—look, in the gathering gloom, like ghostly giants.

But the whole journey is dim and ghost-like—never coming to an end, never having even so much as a beginning; for it is so long ago, that when, in my fireside travels, I post up to town, I am obliged to do so from no starting-point, but to seat myself in the chariot midway upon the road, and take up the broken thread as best I can. Dim and distant, too, is that first foreign trip, when the French postillion, with laced jacket, broad-brimmed hat, and wondrous whip-cracking, seemed an altogether superior being to his English brother. It is at Calais I first meet with him, and it is upon the long, straight French road that he takes us—a road so long and so straight that it

seems, to childish eyes, to lead up into the sky, and nowhere else; although, truly, on account of the paving-stones, it is not a heavenly road at all.

I see no shade of Daniel O'Connell in "my" St. Omer—no priestly seminary; I see nothing, in fact, but an hotel where everything is new to me, a courtyard with a fountain in the midst, and a small boy wearing sabots, who stares at the travellers. I see also a *gâteau de riz*, and therewith the idea—once so vivid—recurs to me that French children must be happy children; for in England there are no plums in the rice puddings!

Out once more upon the sandy road, the rope harness breaking now and then, the whip cracking as we pass through village streets—cracking not at all with a view to posting arrangements generally, or to give notice of our coming, but solely, as we think, with a view to our amusement, or, perhaps, as the outward expression of that exuberant delight which we fancy it is only natural the postillion should take in his profession. Now we toil up a long hill, higher and higher yet, until we reach a little village at the top. From thence we look about us over the wide, flat plains of Flanders; look, as we are bidden, towards the west, and fancy, because we are told so, that we see the white cliffs of England—only we do *not* see them. We do not sleep well in this little inn, where the bedroom is paved with red tiles. Through the disturbed, uneasy night, we secretly think France a dreadful place, and we burn a light to scare the enemy. Far be it from me to take away the character of my neighbours: I write of long ago. Doubtless one sleeps well now, even in Cassel. Next morning, the square lumps of soft beetroot sugar reconcile us once more to life and to *la belle France*; and so we set off again, and before night reach Lille. But here I lose myself—lose the French postillion, and the jaded French horses. I wander amongst the two hundred windmills outside the town of Lille—wander amongst them altogether lost, and coming out no more. The mills are all at work, pressing oil from rape-seed. It is evening, and the whole place seems possessed by some strong giant: Briareus-like his hundred arms move up and down, toss wildly to and fro; and so night comes on, and I never seem to get to Lille at all. My journey ends there—the postillion's whip

still cracking, the two hundred windmills still at work.

In those days the favourite topic of conversation was "what we should be when we grew up." The most successful plan tried to cheer the weary children was to paint their future for them. Having by this time travelled far upon the road, and being in the very heart of that future, we find it far other than we fancied it! Or have the colours faded only? We have reached the half-way house, whence the look back is almost as long as any look ahead of us can be; and it is the *past* now whose tints are so pure and bright.

But a later journey, the last it was my fate to take with post-horses, stands out clearly in my memory. I can, whenever I will, leave Florence for Rome, and, in imagination, post once more, *viâ* Perugia, to the Eternal City. They tell us at first that there are no horses on the road, a paternal government having taken them off with the intention of forcing travellers to use the railway, just then opened, from Siena. It turns out, however, that there *are* horses, or that "perhaps" there are: we risk it, and we go. Away with, for the present at least, irapproachable horses, along the beautiful Val d'Arno in the early dawn of an October morning. From the Donato Pass we look back with a sigh of regret towards *Firenze la bella*; but later, and particularly at the last post before Arezzo, we recall our fears, for there is some delay—horses do not seem forthcoming—and, when at last they appear, are only half-broke, alarming-looking horses! We cannot understand the postillions either; even the courier is at fault. We feel resigned, and sit helpless in the laden carriage in the market-place, and are quite at the mercy of the post-boys when they mount. There are two of them; they quarrel incessantly; every other word is an oath—unmistakable for all our slight knowledge of the language—the brutes they ride are troublesome: one of the wheelers kicks, the other appears shaky on its forelegs; the leaders wander at their own sweet will across the road, till, with a sudden resolve, their rider slashes at them with his whip, swears at them, swears back over his shoulder at the other boy, and off we go at full speed, until they pull up again as suddenly as they started, and we take breath. Not so the "boys;" *they* go on swearing. At last, with an oath on his lips, the elder

post-boy, riding the shaky wheeler, goes down like a shot, and lies there under the carriage. For a moment all is confusion, but the other horses are quiet enough now, and the other postillion too; and, by and by, when the fallen man has rested and remounted, we go on—more slowly, for the knees of the shaky wheeler are broken—through the plain of Arezzo. The way lies through vineyards, but the vines, alas! are diseased. At Sestri, earlier in the year, as we floated on a sea of blue beneath an opal sky, and watched the large-eyed children play upon the beach, our boatman had told us, in his melancholy, subdued tones, "The vine is diseased! What would you? *Gia!* we must starve." We think of this as we drive through the blighted fields; we think, too, of Michael Angelo's opinion that the fine air of Arezzo must be favourable to genius, and fondly hope that ours may unexpectedly develop itself in the neighbourhood of this birthplace of great men.

TABLE TALK.

AT A PLACE CALLED Ober-Ammergau, in the highlands of Bavaria, the inhabitants—wood-carvers and toy-makers—are celebrating a periodical festival: a mystery play, very like that described in ONCE A WEEK, Vol. IV., No. 106, under the title of "Epiphany in Provence." But the Bavarian religious play appears to be carried out in all respects in a manner more pretentious and complete than the Crèche of the south of France. The features of both are identical. The actors represent the characters of Sacred Writ, and the play, of course, is taken from the New Testament. These miracle-plays were once much more common than they now are—indeed, their rareness is all they can have to commend them to the attention of the curious. A considerable number of people have flocked to this little Bavarian village to witness the performances, and prices have risen accordingly. Beds, we are told, are commonly let at thirty-six kreutzers the night; but, owing to the influx of company, they have risen to three times that sum, or about two shillings and ninepence of our English money. So these villagers are not unlike the rest of the world after all.

NEWMARKET IS PRETTY WELL KNOWN as a quaint little town, celebrated for its horse-

racers, and situate one-half in Cambridge-shire, and one-half in Suffolk. And *apropos* of the rise in the price of beds with the demand for sleeping accommodation, I recollect hearing this anecdote there. At the race-meetings, everything the natives of the place let on hire or sell goes up to famine price. A foreigner who had come to Newmarket on some errand not connected in any way with the race-meeting then being held, took up his quarters at the principal inn. He stayed one night only, and, on calling for his bill, the bed was charged at the moderate sum of three guineas. He was surprised at the magnitude of the charge, and thought there must be some mistake in the matter. "I do not want," said he to the landlord, "to buy thees bed, I only want to pay for having sleep in it." Boniface explained that, in "the meeting weeks," it costs as much to sleep in a bed as to buy one at ordinary times. Probably this charge would have covered the expense of lodging for four nights, as it is the practice to let beds either for one night or four during the races at the same, in either case, remunerative price.

I AM VERY FOND of a gallop on the back of a good horse; and when I was an undergraduate at Oxford, and since, I have done some good walking on Scotch moors, among Welsh hills, and in dear Swiss mountain-land; but, confirmed athlete as I am, I have never taken to the bicycle. I think it is a stupid affair, and neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring. Mr. Cox, in his "Recollections," says:—"In the spring of 1819 appeared a silly sort of vehicle called a *velocipede*, in which the motion was half riding and half walking. It had a *run*, but it was *no go*. The only gentleman I ever saw venturing to use one (and that round 'the parks') was a fellow and tutor of New College; his name, curiously enough, was 'Walker.' When he dismounted, he exclaimed—like the Irishman who took a *ride* in a bottomless sedan-chair—'Well, if it were not for the fashion, I would as lieve walk.'" And my own sentiments as to the bicycle in 1870 go a shade further than honest Mr. Walker's, of New College, as to the velocipede of 1819—I would rather walk. My own experience of these vehicles, however, is not extensive. It is limited to two essays. At Oxford I was once, in a moment of weakness, foolish enough to

make one of a party of four mounted on the four-wheeled contrivances in vogue in my young days. My three friends could propel their machines well enough. I had a boy to push mine behind until we were clear of the city. I was then persuaded to send him back. We soon came to a hill, which I could not get up; and I wrathfully abandoned the velocipede, and walked back to Oxford to send somebody to fetch it back. My attempt, years afterwards, to manage a bicycle were equally ineffectual. There was this difference—I abandoned the velocipede—the bicycle abandoned me, many times; and I could show some painful bruises for some days after my first and last lesson. Of the two, I prefer the old-fashioned velocipede as the more harmless. As long as you sat still you were safe.

IT IS ASTONISHING the trouble some men will take to *make* a joke. Dr. Johnson said no man's very good things were impromptu. "Sir, he had carried them in his mind." And certainly, as everybody knows, Sheridan's jokes were found in embryo in his commonplace book; and, doubtless, if our best jokers would be candid, they would tell us that the Doctor's axiom is true. One of the most elaborate attempts I have met with at a punning joke is told in the book above mentioned—Mr. Cox's "Recollections of Oxford." "Dr. Barton, Warden of Merton, gave a dinner one day, and invited Mr. Rook, of his own college; Mr. Crowe, of New College; Mr. Woodcock, of Christchurch; and Mr. Partridge, of Brasenose—who, according to express invitation, were punctual at five o'clock. 'Well, gentlemen,' said the wit, 'I think I have got almost all the birds of the air, but we must wait a little for one *bird more*.' Mr. Berdmore had been expressly invited for half-past five." It is almost impossible to conceive a more deeply laid plot for the bringing off of one little joke than this of the Oxford Don. Mr. Cox's chatty book is full of reminiscences of more or less celebrated Oxford men of a bygone day; and, to such of our readers as have not seen it, we can recommend it as a book likely to prove amusing if picked up at odd times. Like the dictionaries, it is not a volume to be read *through*.

A CONVENTION FOR THE purpose of securing international copyright between Eng-

land and America is at last likely to be arranged between the two countries. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that we have much more to gain by such an arrangement than our cousins on the opposite side of the Atlantic. The number of English books reprinted in America is greater by twenty to one than that of American books reprinted by publishers here. Therefore English authors would gain very much by a system that gave due protection to their interests. American writers, however, must suffer considerably from the wonderful plenty and cheapness of the works of standard English authors in their country. When Tennyson, Dickens, and Disraeli are offered at the bare cost of print and paper, what chance can American poets and novelists have of getting any profit out of their own works? They must be benefited by any measure that will necessarily raise the prices at which the works of living English authors of celebrity are sold in the United States.

UPON "LOTHAIR" AND ITS AUTHOR there is a most ruthless attack in the June number of "Blackwood's Magazine." "Save me from my friends!" may Mr. Disraeli cry with justice. When the Conservative press begins to attack the Conservative Leader, we may, indeed, see the signs of the times—that the beginning of the end has come for the author of "Lothair." Drowned in the din of others' victories—lost in the cool shades of everlasting Opposition, out of which there seems no escape for the Conservative party, Mr. Disraeli felt his sails needed some puff of wind. "Lothair" would hardly have appeared had he been enjoying the palmy security of a working majority. The book is undeniably clever, and such remarks about it as those which "Blackwood" serves up for its readers, namely, that

"'Lothair' is more extravagant than the romances of the 'London Journal'; more inflated in expression and false in grammar than the exercises of an aspiring schoolboy of the fifth form; more foreign to life and reality than the hysteric fancies of a convent-bred girl; and, in point of art, on a level with the drop-scene of a provincial theatre;"

or that its author's descriptions of dukes and lords are but the

"Gin-inspired dreams of the assistant of some fashionable haberdasher, who enjoys glimpses of great houses and great people when he goes out with the goods;"

leave not only criticism, but common de-

cency—in speaking of a man so distinguished as the veteran leader of the Conservative party—far behind. Such an article in such a magazine can hardly be ascribed to anything other than private malice and personal spleen. But by whatever motive it is dictated, this dishonest and untruthful criticism can effect nothing more than the defeat of its own purpose.

THE OLD THORN BUSHES in Leicester-square have been full of white blossom, and very pretty they looked; and their blooming so freely, and thriving so well, shows us clearly enough that something might be done to make the square decent, if not beautiful. As it is now, it is, and has been for years, the standing disgrace and eyesore of the metropolis. The spectacle of the wretched tatterdemalion old statue of a one-armed, broken-nosed king, sitting astride a three-legged, tailless horse, mounted on a sorry pedestal, planted in a wilderness of blackish, coarse grass, and fenced (?) in by a mean and broken palisade of iron railings, is a discredit to the centre of the West-end—and something more. Mr. Ayrton, our Ædile, says it is private property; that to amend it a special Act must be passed; and that the promotion of such Act is the duty of the local authorities. Then, we say, let the local authorities do their duty without a day's delay. If the ghost of Sir Joshua still haunts his "new house in Leicester-square," and he ever looks out of his front windows, how shocked he must be at the sad falling off in the once aristocratic and fashionable Leicester-square. We cannot rehabilitate and cleanse the houses round it, but we might certainly take some steps to make the large plot of grass presentable, keep the ragged, stone-throwing children out, melt the statue—what there is left of it—and give the railings a coat of paint. How long would a Parisian "First Commissioner" leave it as it is?

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THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY.

BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

CHAPTER XXVI.



MR BENBOW returned home, and remained up far into the night, thinking deeply what he wastodo. He suspected more in all this than the mere request which

she had insisted on. This was the idea that took hold of his mind. She meant to make it a lever for harassing him, with what aim Heaven only could tell. Surely this in revenge was too devilish. But why affect him? He had not done it: it was his son who had betrayed and given her up.

He passed a miserable, distracted time. At the end, according to his usual way, the whole seemed much less serious. She would not dare to carry out that demand of hers in earnest. He would give her an introduction or two—just as one would patronize a respectable singer or actress—and then leave the rest to time.

With the morning he was to return to town. The Sword waved all night over him, even in his dreams. At ten o'clock,

when he was ordering his fly, she entered the room.

"I have come for the answer," she said.

"To be sure," he said, with an eager and affected cordiality. "With all my heart. I shall be delighted. I have written you a letter to Lady Mantower, and I shall speak to the Duke; and—"

She gave him a look of contempt.

"That is childish. You are determined not to understand. It is like trifling, and if you will trifle with *me*—" and she turned to leave the room.

"My dear Miss Effingham, you do not understand. I will do anything—"

"Very well, then; as I must speak plainly, you must sit down there and write. Begin now:—"

"MY DEAR DUKE—There is a young lady in whom I am deeply interested. You once saw her act at a little theatre when you were staying with me. I find that she is of good birth, and is a perfect lady. And I am going to make what you may think a strange request—namely, that—"

Mr. Benbow threw down the pen.

"Oh, I cannot do this. I dare not ask him. These things are not to be done. The Duke is not a man that I could venture to treat in that fashion."

"That is for you. Use your diplomacy. Invent some subterfuge. Write what you will; but it must be done. It is for you to find the way. Exert yourself as if it were a dashing scheme that you were longing to carry out. Write a letter—I would advise you—as strong as you can. Take as long as you please. I can wait."

On this she left him. Again he was alone with the situation, and saw how desperate it all was. There was no use resisting: no feints or pretences would do.

"I must go through with it," he said. "She will drive me to do what she wishes—the cold, pitiless, cruel creature."

He went back to the theatre, and asked to see her.

"I am going," he said, "to do what you desire. Writing would be absurd. With such a man as he is, I could have no power to make him take so unusual a course—one so opposed to his views—as the one you propose. It is so extravagant," said Mr. Benbow, having at least the satisfaction of making a mortifying speech—"so out of the usual course for a man of his rank to receive a person that he has never seen, except on the stage, into his house as a guest, that I could only manage it by some extraordinary exertion. I must see him myself, force it on him. His pride, I know, will go against the idea; but it shall be done."

She smiled.

"I see. Well, you may compensate yourself with that poor exhibition of malice. But you cannot guess what an indemnity I shall yet obtain. However, I am content. Do what you propose to do. Settle it all, and as speedily as you can. I shall be a few days longer, and I shall confidently expect to learn that all has been arranged."

Desperate—beside himself with fury, and even despair—Mr. Benbow went his way. He at once "took the train" that went in the direction of Banff, and presented himself to the nobleman, who was not a little surprised to see him. The Duke was, indeed, going to hold one of those splendid Durbars which he fancied, with all their incidents, so ministered to his greatness. He had sent out a sort of ukase to other dukes, marquises, lords, and great parliamentary commoners, bidding them assemble under his enormous tent, and receive and do him homage. He took a pleasure in these vast receptions; and yet the wonder still was, how they were accomplished. It was known that he was "heavily encumbered," as the phrase runs. Yet here he was, living as if he had a hundred thousand a-year. Tradesmen wait obsequiously; he is disdainfully contemptuous of the mean shifts necessary to get money or "pay bills." It would last his time, he supposed.

Following up his resolution, Mr. Benbow put all his strength into carrying out the mission he had undertaken.

"She is a perfect lady," he said, "born and bred. Nothing at all of the stage about her. She just wants connection—select readings at some nobleman's house, and all that."

"My dear Benbow, what are you talking of? With the Princess here, and all that. Surely, you must see it is impossible."

"When I tell you," said Mr. Benbow, with a hollow smile, "it is part of one of my deep-laid schemes—a strange ramification—the meaning of which you would never even guess; when I beg it as a favour, and tell you that an immense deal of my interest depends upon it, I am sure you won't make any difficulty."

"Oh! but I do, Benbow. You see it would be a blemish on all the proceedings. An actress! Good gracious! Why, some of these fine ladies would fly the house."

"But she is *not* an actress, in the common sense of the word. She is a lady. Nowadays there is a peculiar class—in a sort of debatable ground—quite different from the scum and rank and file of the profession. There are some of this class that the Queen takes up and has at the Palace. It gives a prestige to the party—"

"I don't understand it at all," said the Duke, coldly. "I am sure you can't be serious, Benbow. You must see it yourself."

"I do not," said Mr. Benbow. He was always equal to such a crisis. "I don't think I am asking much. I could have made many difficulties, much greater, when you asked me for a matter of much more importance."

The Duke began to waver.

"Well, you know best," he said; "it will lead to endless difficulties. There's Rosa, who is as proud as a Spaniard, will no more suffer it—why, she will sting her out of this place. Cold as she looks, Rosa will never tolerate that sort of thing."

"Very likely Rosa will not be here," said Mr. Benbow, coolly. "I am sorry to be pressing, Duke; but I will make a point of this. You can make a point of something else with me another time."

Much put out, the Duke consented, and Mr. Benbow departed with a formal invitation for Miss L. Effingham—the Duke presently complaining that he did not know what was coming over Benbow, who was forcing all sorts of strange people on him. A woman off the stage, forsooth! But it was the last time he would agree to such a thing, that was certain.

But a greater difficulty was before the unhappy Mr. Benbow. His son and Lady Rosa were, of course, to be chief ornaments

in the ceremonial. The whole pageant was for them, and how it was to be prevented he knew not.

He fashioned out some lame pretence, and then sought his son, who now lived in a grand London house, in all the state of powder, carriages, horses, servants. Father and son had not met since the election. The son was overflowing with gratitude.

"My dear father, you did so much for me. I shall never forget it! And we now go to the Duke's. I shall tell him so. He shall do anything—he must do anything—that you want."

"My dear son," said the father, in a timorous, hesitating way—such a contrast to his old dictator style—"I have just come to you about that very thing. You are not obliged to go to Banff—for this time, at least, are you?"

"O, but we are to be hero and heroine!" "Because," said Mr. Benbow, slowly, "I want you—not to be there! You know I am always plotting and scheming, with my little mines and counter-mines; and I have something on hand now, on account of which I want your absence. Do—do, my dear boy," he added, with a feverish earnestness, "oblige me in this—me, your poor, hard-worked father, who have had such a drudgery of life—nothing to soothe me or keep me up! It may seem unreasonable—a sort of whim—and absurd; but I know you will gratify me in even a little whim of mine which seems absurd, childish, and unmeaning. Could you stay away?"

"My dear father, this is very strange! I don't understand, or see how it can be done. Why, even if I did, Rosa would not hear of it. It is for *her*. She has ordered dresses. She expects to meet people."

"But she must not come," said his father, excitedly. "Think me queer—odd, if you like—unaccountable. I know I am. I have gone through a great deal, and I dare say it has unsettled me. But this is for you as well as for myself. I have a scheme that I want to carry out, and for which your absence is necessary. Oblige me. Consent to this, my dear, dear boy—the only favour I ever asked you—your poor old father, who has worked and slaved so hard! Don't refuse me this little request. Here is money—take it, for a trip to Paris."

"Well," said the son, after a pause—"father, I can't refuse you anything. But, I tell you, the difficulty is Rosa. How

are we to manage her? What plan have you?"

"O, my dear boy, that must be for you altogether. I *dare* not appear in it. Take it all on yourself. Find out what will do with her—you know her better than I do. Say that you cannot go, or are unwell."

"My dear father, all this strikes me as very odd! Give me some reason—some rational explanation—before I can behave in this singular way."

"I can't—I can't! One day I may explain it. But, before Heaven! it is all for you, as well as for myself. I am growing wretched about all these things."

"Well, I agree. It will bring about some strange scenes, for Rosa will not put up with any treatment. I don't know how to begin with her; but, as you insist on it, I'll do my best. I can do no more."

Mr. Benbow was full of gratitude.

"You are a dear, good son," he said; "and I will make it up to you, never fear. And it is all for your own good, too."

He felt somewhat relieved, though still anxious. He was concerned about Lady Rosa. There was a cold, impenetrable manner about her which made him distrustful. She was a woman of the world, "to the end of her nails"—selfish, he was sure. She did not like him either. However, his son would do his best, he knew that. Had not he done his best—slaved and worked for *him*?

As he was waiting, the Lady Rosa was announced, and entered haughtily. He saw in her face that she came to bring him to account.

"I cannot understand all this," she began; "and I must tell you plainly, it cannot be—unless, at least, you favour us with some rational explanation. You know yourself, as a man of the world, it is absurd, and cannot be. And I must really ask you not to be using your influence with *him* for these sort of whims."

"He has promised to do so," said Mr. Benbow, desperately, "and he will keep to his promise. I am a man of schemes, and am not going back if I undertake it. You may set me down, Rosa, as having some crafty plan in my head—"

"That will not do, Mr. Benbow. There is more in this than you fancy we imagine. There is someone you are afraid we should meet."

All at once it flashed on Mr. Benbow—

his frenzied head had not been able to think of it before. It was an inspiration worthy of his best and brilliant days.

"You are very clever, Lady Rosa. You ladies beat us in wit and penetration. You have guessed my secret, and I throw myself on your indulgence. There *is* someone I should not wish either of you to meet; someone you would not wish *him* to meet. Shall I tell you? That actress, who was so much in love with him, and for whom, it must be owned, he had a sort of *tendresse*—a boyish one—she is to be there."

Lady Rosa started.

"Oh, indeed!"

"Yes; but I don't want him to know it. You will blame me when I tell you that I got her invited there."

"You did, Mr. Benbow!"

"Yes, I did. There is something which I am not obliged to unfold. She wishes to rise in her profession—to make connections and patrons—and uses me for the purpose. I promised her long ago I would do this for her. Can you guess the reason, Lady Rosa? Young men are so foolish, so infatuated! There is no reasoning with them. I did not attempt reasoning. I went and bought off the enemy."

Mr. Benbow felt that all this was very clever, and that he was quite getting back his mastery over events.

Lady Rosa smiled contemptuously. She was too proud to appear to feel any emotion or apprehension. But the effect had been produced.

"Your son, I feel sure, is not likely to pay *me* such a bad compliment. But I have no wish to meet such a person in our house; or if I do go, it will be only from duty. Well, as you make such a very great point of it, Mr. Benbow, and as it is the first request you have made to me, I shall see that he does not go."

This was beyond his hopes. After all, he might still baffle this odious enemy. Everything was turning out well. His old cunning was serving him still. Though he stood on a precipice—and the idea made him gasp—he had stood there a long time, and it might end in thrusting *someone* else over it.

O, how he loathed—hated her! How he shrank from the very notion of dwelling on her—of thinking of her name even—of the theatre which held her! Had he lived in the days of the unscrupulous princes who

at one time ruled in Italy, when the most successful man was he who got his enemy's throat cut as quickly and as promptly as possible, it is to be feared—say, that Mr. Benbow, in his desperation, would have found it difficult to resist the seduction of this rough and ready process. Not that Mr. Benbow was not an honourable and scrupulous man—that would have sat on the bench with magistrates, and been gravely severe on the boy who had stolen turnips, and have firmly and severely warned him against the dangers and immorality of the course he was pursuing. But, in truth, if the cynical observer of mankind could but have suitable opportunity of experimenting on mankind, and find out the suitable bait for every man, each according to his weak places and tastes—provided always there was the seal of secrecy, and an eternal strict privacy guaranteed—under these conditions, there would be some wonderful revelations—the most terrific backslidings in the case of the greatest purists. Take a man that was next in succession to some great office; his party going out—not likely to come in again for years; the holder of the office aged and decayed, and likely to be succeeded by some "good life"—and this probable successor overwhelmed with debts and difficulties. If some Familiar of Darkness could be imagined as saying to the latter that one simple action—say the mere turning of a handle—would *ensure*, without risk of discovery, the destruction of that opponent, and were this invitation renewed again and again—suggested, insinuated—no danger—nothing but turning of a handle—it is to be feared that the most stoical, the most virtuous in the community would in time fail and fall. At all events, here was the arrangement made and agreed to; and Mr. Benbow departed with a lighter heart than he had borne for a long time.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE festival at Banff Castle was to be more than usually extravagant. The Duke had some secret and diplomatic aims, no doubt. He had all manner of august and stately ladies, of rank and influence, assembled; awful matrons, faded but still of great power. Through their veins seemed to percolate, not blood, but a sort of thin liquor, not unlike old port when it has been kept to a vast age—which these ladies had been also. Everything was in state—every-

thing *en grande*. A great ball was to be given in honour of the tremendous influence which had latterly visited the family.

There was the Marchioness of Cantyre ; the—but why not quote the fashionable journal which records the *fasti* of the great?—

“The Duke and Duchess of Banffshire are entertaining a distinguished circle at Banff. Among the company are Lord and Lady Mountattic, Lord Obau, Lady Ellen Fermor, the Count Dembrowski, Sir Robert Huish, General Baker, G.C.B., Lord Dunbrownie, Hon. Mr. Perkins, Mr. Benbow, &c. We understand that the noble Duke intends celebrating the late auspicious incidents in his family with a ball to the surrounding district.”

Mr. Benbow arrived by himself—a sort of stranger—and found nearly the whole party assembled. He entered with a sigh of relief ; for, as he looked round, he found no sign of his son or of his daughter-in-law.

That day there was a large party. The Duke, before going into dinner, spoke to him, asking him what was the meaning of the non-appearance of Charles and his wife. Mr. Benbow could give no explanation. Perhaps they would arrive in time for dinner.

What a splendid banquet that was—all the family plate piled up in a sort of mountainous buffet! The Duke enthroned as usual. But just as they sat down the jingle of the hall-bell was heard ; and presently, after much expectation, a servant appeared, ushering in a lady. Well might Mr. Benbow's heart sink as he saw that apparition—the handsome actress—dressed in a ladylike way, with perfect self-possession, advance to take her place among that brilliant company. Now, indeed, his miserable trial was about to begin. Now, indeed, might all his nerves quiver, and the Sword wave slowly over his head. Yes, here was that daring, pitiless actress, holding, cutting her bright way into the select ranks, and sitting down there bent on that one ruthless purpose of injuring, destroying him. He was sure, certain of it. As he looked down the table timorously, and saw her self-possession, he felt a chill at his heart—a presentiment that this woman would walk on her course pitilessly, and carry out some undefined purpose, notwithstanding all his honest carrying out *his* part of the agreement. He

could see she was quite at home with her neighbours—not in the least confused—a perfect lady in manner and bearing. Well, that was some comfort ; and things might, after all, turn out well.

THE PLEA OF A PECKED PHILISTINE.

WILL someone please speak to Mr. Mill and his clever ladies? Perhaps you know him or them, Mr. Editor, and if so, pray, oh pray tell them that some ladies, who are not clever, take their jokes in earnest. For months past I have read extracts in the newspapers about the “subjection of women”—the unrepresented state of women, and so forth—with much amusement ; and though the keen irony has at times made my heart burn, I have enjoyed the jokes, though they *were* made at the expense of myself and my sex. But, sir, I have a wife, I have two mature daughters, and I regret to say that the sense of humour is very slight in any one of them. Mary, indeed, seems to be amused when she sees a bonnet or dress which is not quite in the fashion ; and her mamma laughed immoderately one day at the idea of the son of a tradesman thinking himself a gentleman just because he had managed to raise himself to the position of judge ; but, on the whole, they do not see jokes, and as Mill and his merry women have omitted to follow poor Artemus Ward's system of marking what it “rote” or spoke “sarcastical,” they have conceived the idea that they have got real grievances to complain of. Now, I should not intrude these little domestic discomforts upon the public if it were not that I have good reasons for knowing that a large number of English women, who have nothing particular to do—or, at any rate, do not choose to be bored by doing it—are also making themselves, and all belonging to them, miserable by similar grievance-hunting. For when man, woman, or child takes up that sport, he, she, or it is sure of a find.

I am a City man, without leisure for much reading out of my own line, but some years ago I did beguile a seaside trip with a book on “Liberty,” by this same Mr. Mill who has now come out in the comic-ironical line (“Subjection of Women!” Good that! Ha, ha, ha!). Now, that work on “Liberty” was one of the clearest

and cleverest things I ever did set eyes on. I read it over and over again, till I knew a lot of passages by heart; and my thumb'd and broken-backed copy lies quite handy now. But I am rather surprised at the same author going in for satire; I should not have thought it would have been his style. I have not read the new book, and shall not have the time to do so yet awhile; but of course the title tells me what it is. It must be a satire on the fathers and husbands of the present day, for letting their daughters and wives get the upper hand of them so completely as they have done. And we must have carried the exaltation of the one sex above the other to an absurd height, when all these clever women have joined the cry, satirically making believe that they occupy an inferior position. It is a quaint way of taunting the men into asserting themselves—much as if Mrs. Beecher Stowe had combated slavery, not by "Uncle Tom's Cabin," but with a story representing the tyranny of the slaves over their masters. But, as I have said, the irony is too subtle, and many of the dominant dears take it all as *bonâ fide*, and are beginning to clamour for the shadow of power as well as the substance.

I speak from positive experience. The other morning, as I was finishing my breakfast—which I have to take at an earlier hour than suits my family—my aquiline wife walked into the room, followed by her girls, all three looking so preternaturally solemn that I felt a qualm in my cheque-book. Well, my signature was indeed demanded, but to a moral, not a pecuniary, extravagance; for my wife produced a parchment roll bearing many names, and required me to add mine. It was a petition for conferring the franchise on women, and the preamble seriously set forth many of the jocular utterances which I had seen culled in the newspapers from the speeches and writings of Mill and his merry women.

Did I sign it? Of course I did. I would sign a petition for anything—for the sequestration of my own property, for the amputation of my head, if it would give the slightest pleasure to anyone. For whoever heard of a petition to Parliament having the slightest effect one way or the other? But from the conversation which followed in the evening—for I was just starting for the City at the time—I discovered that my wife and daughter, together with a number

of their female friends, actually and seriously believe that, because they have not got votes, they are unrepresented in the government of the country! Was ever a mechanical action, such as going to the hustings and recording a vote, so unduly exalted? Were cause and effect ever so jumbled together? Did the fable of the body and its members ever get enacted so literally? Women unrepresented! Why, what ideas, sympathies, prejudices cling like those which a boy learns at his mother's knee? Surely it is understating the case to say that five men out of ten owe their religion and politics to the maternal source *only*, and that nine out of ten are influenced by it! So long as women are mothers, they need never fear that they will not exercise their full share of influence on the next generation, at all events, even if they fail to exert much over their husband and male friends. But surely these latter cases are very rare; few men are such fools, or so unfortunately wedded, as not to place considerable value on the opinions of their wives, even when their own do not coincide with them. Take the ritualist movement, for instance: how many hundreds, if not thousands, of men acquiesce quietly in a symbolism which only excites their surprise and not their reverence, because their womankind seem to find good in it, and they are not prepared to condemn or laugh down what their wives and sisters think holy?

But female influence is so omnipotent and universal that it is absurd to mention particular instances. Why do men seek to make money, but that they may offer comforts and luxuries to women? Why are they ambitious, but that they may cast their honours at Beauty's feet? Would such sentiments as patriotism, loyalty, love of home exist if there were no women in the land? How many members of Parliament are there with whom the desire to increase the welfare and happiness of their countrywomen is not a master-sentiment? And, if there are any senators who are indifferent to such objects, how many of their constituents would support them at the next election if they knew it? Children have no votes, but they are represented by every father in the House.

Dear me, I am getting quite warm. The fact is, I do not like to see common sense and everyday experience totally ignored; and if anyone believes that a candidate who

had gained the interest and sympathy of a large majority of the women of the county and borough he stood for would not be just as safe of heading the poll as if they all had personal votes to give him, he or she has very little of either.

If the clever women who are poking their fun at us by pretending to be treated like inferiors, really wished to vote at elections, and persuaded any considerable number of their sex to wish it too, of course they would have their way, as they always do in everything, fast enough. I can think of no logical reason against it. But it would be a suicidal risk; for the chances are that their power would soon decline. The great force of female influence lies in its subtle, undemonstrative action. People who live together are apt to take different sides of a question, from an instinctive desire to examine it in all its bearings; and husbands and wives are no exception to the rule. But give the wife time, and her superior tact is pretty sure to bring her husband round, if she has the matter really at heart. But once oblige her to show her cards, and record her opposition by a hostile vote, and her chance of effecting conversion is gone for ever.

And it would be a fortunate thing if the pair agreed to differ in politics quietly: a new experience in human affairs. A general election is a general calamity as it is. What friendships it severs; what heart-burnings, class-hatreds, petty jealousies it excites! Just fancy what a pandemonium the land would become—I can think of no milder term—if women generally went as mad upon politics on these occasions as men do? Can you doubt but what pink husbands and blue wives would bring a rare lot of grist to the divorce mills?

Unless, indeed, there was a regular row, in which, of course, the weakest—the physically weakest—would go to the wall, and man would assume the position he holds in semi-civilized societies. The idea of wearing one's own—I mean, of being master instead of slave—is a vision of the future not without its charms. But the dream is vain: women will never be so foolish as to throw away their advantages, and fight men with their own weapons.

But, really, there is reason for the irony of Mr. Mill and his friends; no doubt, the authority of women has grown too absolute and overwhelming. When a man marries,

he puts himself entirely in his wife's power, and if he exercises any authority it is purely on sufferance. She can disgrace him, and he cannot disgrace her; for while both law and custom forbid him to enforce his will in practice, the theory that he is to do so has survived, and he is, therefore, responsible for her actions. If she chooses to be extravagant and ruin him, he has only one remedy, that of going round to every shop in the neighbourhood and warning the tradesmen not to serve her, and stamping himself as a mean fellow for life. When the smash comes, it is he who will have to go to prison and take all the blame, while she receives universal compassion for being sacrificed to a man who could not afford to maintain her. If he flirts, the neglected wife becomes an interesting object of sympathy; if she flirts, he is despised for allowing it, though, should he interfere in any way, the laughter is louder against "the jealous fool!" As for minor matters, such as driving away his friends by the coldness of her manner, and generally taking all the honey out of his existence, she can work her will if she chooses—he is quite helpless. In short, if he is not henpecked, it is simply because his hen has the forbearance not to peck him.

I do not suppose that this is altogether a bad thing. In the first place, it is a humanizing habit for the strong to give way to the weak; and, in the second, women, as a rule, are so much better than men that their influence is, for the most part, salutary. Still, it is certainly a question whether we have not reached the limit; and if the feminine, or spasmodic and sentimental, element is not gaining undue preponderance in mortal affairs. Equality should be maintained between the sexes, and it is not well that the masculine should be so down-trodden as it is at present.

Besides the jocular representations of the subjection of men, couched in ironical diatribes against that of women, I read serious discussions in the newspapers about female education and work. That is all right enough. The education of English girls has been as stupid as any system could well be: teaching them music and drawing, whether they had any taste for those arts or not; cramming them with hard facts as if they were going in for competitive examinations; training their memories and not their minds. A better plan cannot be started too soon.

If poor little girls are to be bothered with lessons, let them get some advantage from them at any rate. As for opening various trades and professions to women, that is a mere question of supply and demand. There is a certain amount of work to be done in the world, and men and women divide it amongst them. The allotment of tasks is a matter of custom, convenience, natural tendency. There is no abstract reason, I suppose, why women should not groom the horses; only if they do men must scrub the floors. Or the wife might make a very good doctor—though it would be inconvenient when her own confinement coincided with those of her best-paying patients; but, if she practises, the husband must stop at home to look after the household matters. Everybody thinks his own work more irksome than that of other people, at times, when weary and discontented; and that, I suppose, is the reason why some ladies have depreciated their position in the world. As if there could be a nobler mission possible than the maintenance of home, the one institution which saves men from degenerating into savages!

"Women," said my better half, the other day, "will no longer accept the degrading tasks of 'suckling fools and chronicling small beer.'" But why it should be nobler to manage the finances of a firm or a nation than of a household; or why the bringing up and early training of "fools" should be inferior work to vaccinating them, making their wills, taxing them, cheating them, providing them with railways, gas, coal, imprisoning them, or hanging them, she does not explain. How should she, when the writings and reported speeches which she forms all her present opinions upon are, I am sure of it, written in fun?

WHITSUN-MONDAY WITH THE BENEVOLENT SHEPHERDS.

WHEN an esteemed relative died and left me his very pretty and compact estate (three hundred acres in a ring fence), in the parish of Great Snoring, I rather shrank from the place on account of its name. But I soon comforted myself by the reflection that property has its duties, and that one of those duties is to acquiesce in the topographical nomenclature that is attached to an estate which received its names and titles centuries before its owner

was born. And I was further consoled, because the name of the house of residence on my estate was not Great Snoring Hall, but Snorton Hall; so that by suppressing the name of the parish, and making use of that of the adjacent market town, Pillowley, I made my address to be "Snorton Hall, Pillowley, Beds."

But although I could thus annihilate Great Snoring on the outside of my envelopes, yet Great Snoring altogether refuses to be overlooked in my everyday life. Very irrepressible is it on Whitsun-Monday, when "the club walks." When I used this local expression to my friend Tom Sherry, who has a weakness for poor puns and other frivolities, he observed that if a club walks it is an exaggerated walking-stick; and he expected me to laugh at his brilliant witicism. I am glad to say that I preserved my self-respect and looked serious. On Whitsun-Monday, then, it is a great day in our parochial annals, for the very reason that "the club walks." The club in question is "The Great Snoring Branch of the Lodge of Benevolent Shepherds." It is not what is usually called a public-house club—that is, a club whose members hold all their weekly and other meetings at the village inn, with an understanding that each person, on every occasion, is to spend a certain sum "for the good of the house," which, of course, is in an inverse ratio to the good of himself and family. No! our rector would not have anything to do with it—no more would I—if it were a public-house club; and, when the late Mr. Tidd Pratt drew up the rules by which we are governed, it was expressly ordered and provided that not a fraction of a farthing of our funds should be swallowed down our own throats for the benefit of the publican.

I use the word "we," for I am a Benevolent Shepherd—in fact, as the subscription required from an honorary member is only five shillings, and, as I prefer to give the club a sovereign, I may look upon myself as four Benevolent Shepherds rolled into one. I confess that I do not trouble them much either with my company or advice, having perfect confidence that my friend the rector can see to their affairs very much better than I can do. I therefore consider myself the more obliged to take part with my brother Benevolent Shepherds on the day of their annual demonstration, and not only to show that I am a Shepherd, but "to

behave as sich." This involves the walking in procession to church, and dining with the club at the village inn. For although, as I have emphatically said, we are not a public-house club, yet on Whitsun-Monday it is altogether another matter; and, if we did not dine at "The Goat and Compasses," I don't know where our dinner could be held, or how it could be provided, without much unnecessary trouble and expense. So, each year, we dine in the large room at "The Goat and Compasses;" and, as each Benevolent Shepherd pays his own share for what he eats and drinks, the club money is not touched, and the fund provided for a time of sickness and death is not diverted from its destined purpose. It is for this reason that the rector consents to preside at the dinner; and, I may add, it is for a like cause that I willingly "support the chair."

Let me briefly describe our proceedings on this last Whitsun-Monday, June 6th. In the first place we had glorious weather. I don't mean to say that it was altogether the weather that our farmers desired; for we were greatly in need of rain, and our pastures and gardens were athirst for a shower, and the beans and peas and root-crops were languishing for a down-pour. But, for the matter immediately in hand, the weather was glorious. A north-east wind tempered the heat, which otherwise would have been oppressive; and we walked to church comfortably. So far as the entire population of the village is concerned, this going to church is the chief event of the day; for then is the time when "the club walks," and everyone turns out of doors to see the sight. It is somewhat trying to one's feelings; for we not only are preceded by a brass band, but we have several banners and gorgeous paraphernalia. I wear a sash and scarf and badge; and have a strong consciousness that I look a fearful guy, and that if Tom Sherry or any other friend were suddenly to meet me, what a joke there would be made of it in the smoking-room of our Pall-Mall club. Every other Benevolent Shepherd also wears a sash, scarf, and badge; added to which we resemble Bob Cratchit's wife (in the "Christmas Carol"), who was "brave in ribbons, which are cheap, and make a goodly show for sixpence;" for, though our adornments are not costly, they are of the showy and gorgeous kind, with much "barbaric pomp" about them.

So we walk through the village, admired of all beholders, with the brass band—from Pillowley—playing in advance of us, the leader whereof reminds me of the leader of the orchestra in a little country theatre, of whom Charles Lamb has put upon record that he played a note in advance of the others in order to show that he was the leader. But if the time of our band is somewhat in fault, its power of producing an amazing noise is certainly considerable; and the drummer is evidently intent upon earning his day's wages; for he thumps his big drum lustily at every stroke, until the welkin—whatever that may be—rings with the echoes. "Cheer, boys, cheer" is the tune, and we march up to the churchyard-gate to the music of the inspiring air. There the leader gives the signal for a change from secular to sacred melody; the band plays "The Old Hundredth," and precedes us to the church-porch, where it files on one side and "plays us in." The larger banners, like Macbeth's, are hung out on the outer walls; and all we Benevolent Shepherds pass under the Early-English archway of the south door, and take our seats in church. Then follows the service and a sermon from the rector; the highly decorated congregation having a very singular effect when they stand up for the singing, and, in their parti-coloured sashes and ribbons, looking almost as gay as some of the figures in the stained-glass windows.

When the service is over we walk back in procession to the village inn. In the churchyard the Pillowley brass band plays the Austrian hymn; and in the road exchange it for "Rory O'More," in which the drummer, if possible, transcends his previous efforts; but, as his appearance in Great Snoring is limited to the annual occurrence of the Whitsun-Monday club-walking, he may consider himself to be justified in giving the club enough for their money and of leaving an indelible impression of his performance on the villagers' minds, if not on the *tympana* of their ears. By the way, the payment of the brass band is the most serious expense in the day's proceedings; but the members of the Lodge, and their wives and families, esteem it so highly and look forward to it so anxiously, that neither the rector nor myself have considered it right to attempt to do away with it—more especially as the Benevolent Shepherds individually subscribe their *quota* towards the charge. Not only

does it "play them to church" and back again, but it is also retained to play to them during and after dinner; and as the dining-room at the village inn, although large, is low, the noise is terrific. But the canon of musical criticism with the Benevolent Shepherds appears to be, the greater the noise the better the music; and one of them, who was gazing upon the drummer with admiring eyes, observed to me "He do thump it 'ard, doa'nt he, sir?" He certainly did, and the nerves of my head painfully testified to the fact.

Of course the dinner was the crowning event of the day. What is an Englishman without his dinner? Especially when he lives as a day-labourer in Great Snoring, and can only get his choice of various huge joints on the day of the feast of the Benevolent Shepherds. If it could be said of one of the members of our club, "and one day makes him 'fat' for all the year," that day would be Whitsun-Monday, when the quantity of solid meat that he contrives to eat is something astounding. His only embarrassment is the embarrassment of riches. Whether he shall begin with beef, continue with mutton, and end his first course with veal; or whether he shall begin with the veal and work through mutton to beef; or whether he shall first remove the edge of his appetite by a pound-weight of beef-steak pie: these are tremendous problems to solve, especially when delay in their solution is dangerous. But the problems are eventually solved, and apparently to everyone's satisfaction. The surgeon of the club has joined us at dinner, having been prevented from attending church by being called to a case in the next parish; and I have remarked that, by a curious coincidence, he always is called on Whitsun-Monday to a case in the next parish, and the attendance on that case occupies him till the hour for dinner. The surgeon faces the rector by taking the vice-chair. I support the rector on the right, and on the left is the father of the club. Not much is said during dinner: it is the time for action and not for talk. But there is a great clatter of plates and glasses, and cups and jugs, and knives and forks, and much scurrying to and fro, and even "hollering" for dishes that are out of reach. The brass band, too, plays during the dinner, and atones for any silence of the company, and its presence and performance are thought much of by the Benevo-

lent Shepherds; for the gentleman on my right, after the sixth plateful has satisfied his wants and somewhat moved his bashfulness, says to me, "Queen Victoriar has a band o' music to play to her when she eats her wittles!"—having said which he lapses into his normal condition of silence, being evidently of opinion that he has enlightened me regarding a Court mystery.

I can't say that I am sorry when the dinner is over. What with the noise of the brass band, and the fumes of the meat, and the sight of so many huge hot joints in a close room at two o'clock in the day, and two or three tables full of human beings "putting away" large masses of the said joints into their "most capacious mouths"—or, as Staudigl was wont to pronounce it, when he sang the Polyphemus music, "most capahzius mouse"—the effect of all these things combined is, "not to put too fine a point upon it," somewhat different to one's sensations at a "little dinner" at one's London club. Still, one cannot expect town and country clubs to be placed on the same footing—especially when the country club is the Great Snoring Branch of the Lodge of Benevolent Shepherds. At the same time, I am quite willing to recognize the fact that, from the position I hold in the parish of Great Snoring, as a sort of squire (Lord Yawnborough is the real squire and lord of the manor, but his nearest residence is The Blanquets, twenty miles distant from Great Snoring), and as the proprietor of Snorton Hall, I am bound to support the people of Great Snoring by my influence, example and co-operation, not only as an honorary member of the Lodge of Benevolent Shepherds, but also in recognition of the indisputable fact that property has its duties as well as its—but I think I said that before, and I fear that the fumes of the dinner and the noise of the band are beginning to affect my head. I will, therefore, content myself with the remark, that I am sorry that the late Mr. Tidd Pratt, when he drew up the rules of our Lodge, should not have made it a regulation that no Benevolent Shepherd should be permitted on any consideration whatever, on the recurrence of his annual banquet, to convey his dinner to his mouth by the sole aid of a large knife. I remember seeing the Japanese jugglers at the Crystal Palace; but in the particular just mentioned their performance was surpassed by the Benevolent

Shepherds of Great Snoring. However, the surgeon did not leave his seat in the vice-chair, so I suppose that no Shepherd wounded himself with his steel blade.

Certainly, I am not at all sorry when the dinner is over and grace has been said. Then the rector stands up and reads a report of the club's doings for the past twelve months; and concludes by asking all present to drink the health of the Queen. We rise on our legs, while the band favours us with a verse of the National Anthem. Then the father of the Benevolent Shepherds stands up and thumps on the table to command attention. When he has done so, he commences an elaborate search in the pockets of his small-clothes; and, after much difficulty, produces a sovereign. It is evidently kept there for the annual occasion, and brought out merely for show—like the guineas in the pockets of the Vicar of Wakefield's daughters. With this sovereign in his hand, the father of the club then delivers this speech:—"Brother Shepherds—I begs to say—that we drinks to the rector's 'ealth—and a many on 'em—and we are very much obleeged to him"—(he pronounces it "obleeged" as though he were Lord Russell himself!)—"for coming among us—and taking the cheer—and preaching to us a sarmint—I'm sure it were a downright good 'un—and I begs that, according to custom—you'll obleege we—by acceptin' of a suffering." A great clatter rewards the father's speech; and although his language may be somewhat dubious in its pronunciation, yet it is made especially clear by his action; for he pulls his scanty forelock, and, making a reverence to his Reverence, hands him the sovereign.

The rector takes the gold coin as though he were glad to have it; and then, rising, thanks the father of the club, and all the brethren, for this renewed proof of their esteem for him. He could assure them that he continued to take the highest interest in their best welfare, and that he did the little that he could do to support their club from a conviction and knowledge that it proved of great service to them at periods when they and their families stood in need of help. It had given him much pleasure to be with them at their dinner, and also to walk with them to church, and there to sanctify the day's proceedings by joining in public worship; and he hoped that, so long as their club existed, they and their

children after them would never neglect that very important part of the business of the day. If they would permit him to do so, he should wish to transfer the sovereign they had so kindly given him to the reserve fund of the club. Before sitting down, he would beg to propose the health of the father of the club.

The rector then hands the sovereign to the father of the club, and sits down amid great applause: the little drama in which he has just played a part having been similarly acted, with the greatest gravity, each Whitsun-Monday for several years past. If the rector were to pocket his sovereign and merely bow his thanks, it would be the destruction of a time-honoured formula; but, as it is, the club maintains its dignity in presenting the golden coin, and the rector receives *kudos* for giving it back to them as a donation to the club. Thus, the annual performance hurts nobody; but, on the contrary, is something akin to the quality of mercy, and blesses him that gives and also him that returns the gift. The Benevolent Shepherds are men of action rather than words; and, when the father of the club rises to return thanks, his oratorical effort is very brief, but to the point:—"I'm vastly obleeged to you—for a-drinkin' of my 'ealth—in return, I begs to drink all o' yourn." He then resumes his seat, with the air of a man who has done his duty and got a load off his mind.

Then comes the stage in the day's proceedings when pipes are permitted to be smoked; and the rector vacates the chair, which is taken by the surgeon; and, as the brass band strike up "Hail, smiling morn," I and the rector make our escape out of the room, and leave the Benevolent Shepherds to themselves and their surgeon. It is very pleasant to get into the fresh air once more—more especially as I have removed the badges and sashes and other outward evidences of my being a Benevolent Shepherd—and to wander up a quiet country lane, and hear the partridges and pheasants calling and crowing in the fields and woods, and inhale the delicious flavour of the clover and beans and hedge-row honeysuckle, and to get out of the sound of the big drum of the Pillowley brass band. Nevertheless, all well, I shall do my best on Whitsun-Monday, 1871, to attend the annual meeting of the Great Snoring Branch of the Lodge of Benevolent Shepherds.

THE MORTIMERS :

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK IV.—CHAPTER II.

MALTON PARK.

THERE were, in the part of the county of Berks in which the scene of our story is laid, three principal mansions. These were—Madingley Chase, the residence of the Mortimers, with which our readers are already familiar. Despencer Castle, which had been the occasional abiding-place of Mabel's eccentric old father, Sir Everard Despencer, at such seasons of the year as he thought proper to honour the society of his native county with his presence. A gloomy, uninviting pile of ill-assorted, yet withal picturesque buildings. Sir Edward had always hated and avoided it. He said it gave him the "blues" and brought on the gout; and he had often talked of pulling it down, and erecting a modern house in its place. Since his death it had remained shut up and untenanted, save by a few necessary domestics. The third mansion was distant some four or five miles from both the Castle and the Chase. Malton Park, the ancient seat of the marquises of Malton—the Great House, as the country people called it—was a substantial structure, of large dimensions, built of the stone furnished in abundance by the neighbouring quarries. It stood in the midst of a park of broken and undulating ground, possessing within the high stone wall that ran round three sides of it both hill and dale, heath and meadow land.

The house stood on a slight eminence, the ground beyond it sinking abruptly till it reached the margin of a large pool or lake, which owed its origin to nature and its extension to art. There was a high tower at one angle of the buildings, erected in the time of James I., by Sir Frederick Despencer—the marquise dated from the reign of George II.—for hawking purposes. High in the air, above one of the narrow windows, was the weather-beaten and decaying coat of arms of the Stuart King; and near it, but at a respectful and loyal distance, that of the Despencer who built it. The other portions of the mansion, which formed the sides of a great quadrangle enclosing a large plot of grass, were of a date somewhat

later, and perfectly uniform in style and architectural detail. The entrance from the park was through an arched gateway, leading into the quadrangle to the principal door, approached by a flight of wide stone steps. A balustrade ran round the top of the whole building, formed—instead of the conventional pilasters—of Brobdingnagian stone letters, presenting, to the solemn admonition of all beholders, a goodly portion of the one hundred and twenty-seventh Psalm—the first verse beginning directly over the gateway: "*Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain;*" which pious legend could be read with ease from various points of view, at some little distance from the mansion. Altogether, the house—in which generation after generation of the Despenchers had been born, lived, and died—was a majestic and uncommon edifice. The stables and outbuildings of all kinds were on a scale commensurate with the mansion. Acres of gardens and ornamental grounds surrounded it, and the whole was enriched by a park unequalled by any in the county, the Royal demesne alone excepted. Long glades stretched between the thickly planted trees, from the house to the farthest limits of the park, across which, as you watched from the lawn, you might see the deer bound. The plantations and preserves were thickly stocked with pheasants and hares. During the long minority of the present owner of this estate, the gardens had been terribly neglected, and the whole place had worn an uncomfortable and dilapidated appearance.

Malton Park had always been too large a place for the fortunes of the family to whom, from its first erection, it had belonged; yet all had felt a proper pride in ruining themselves and impoverishing their successors, in order to keep it up in becoming state. Nor was the sporting youth to whom it had descended without this feeling; and no sooner did Malton become Duke of Fairholme than he resolved to expend a large sum of money upon the renovation and rehabilitation of his ancestral halls. As everybody knows, the dukedom is a Scotch peerage; and Malton naturally preferred his native county as a residence to a giant castle in the far north of Scotland. Accordingly, he gave the word, and armies of workmen laid siege to his house at

Malton Park—painters, and decorators, and gilders; and in less than a year a magic change was wrought. What is there that a London upholsterer and a Scotch gardener, with a *carte blanche* and a Duke for patron, cannot effect? And all that could be done they did in most royal style, without stopping to count the cost.

The news of the doings at the Park travelled far and wide in the county. It reached the ears of bankrupt Mr. Childers, through his son Jack, who had the fullest particulars of his plans and intentions from Fairholme himself. Mr. Childers carried the news to the county town at quarter sessions, and thence it was spread abroad by his worthy brother magistrates in all directions; and many a prudent mother's heart beat with hopeful anticipation of catching the young Duke for one or other of her dear girls. Lady Barrenacre especially was elated beyond measure when she heard that Fairholme was coming to live in his native county, and keep the hounds, as his father had done before him.

"I always liked that young Malton," she said to his lordship, her husband, "in spite of all that was said against him. He showed quite an affection for Amelia when he was but a child."

"You forget, my dear, that he has never seen her since," her husband replied, with a laugh.

And many another mother besides Lady Barrenacre felt a most affectionate interest in the doings of the owner of Malton Park. Quite careless, however, of these matronly speculations and designs for securing his happiness and welfare, in the Duke of Fairholme were developed those tastes which had distinguished the Marquis of Malton from his boyish days. In his horses, his betting-book, and his games at cards, he found the only pleasure and occupation for which he had any real regard. When a minor, a boy hardly clear of the encumbrance of masters and tutors, he had made his book regularly on every great event, as the principal races of the year are termed. It was, then, hardly to be wondered at that, as soon as ever he had passed the Rubicon every boy pants to leave behind him, and his own signature was honoured by his own bankers, that he lent no unwilling ear to John Butler's suggestion that he should have a few nice horses of his own.

"With your name, my lord, you're not

your father's son if you don't have two or three yearlings in training on Malton Downs."

And the result of the trainer's hint was that a few of "the right sort" were got together, and entered for various races. Pedagogue turned out well; and, as Sir Harold had promised, he gave him to his ward; and the colt was "backed" and "broke," and put through the several mysterious processes of preparation that make the trained racehorse of the raw yearling. Malton Downs, too, were so very conveniently situated, so close to the Park, and the ride over was the very prettiest in the neighbourhood. So hoods and clothes were made at the saddlers', of light and dark blue checks, and in the corners a marquis's coronet was embroidered over the initial M, giving place shortly to a ducal one over the letter F. And the Duke and the Duke's colours were immensely popular, for his stable was very successful, and his horses had an honourable reputation for "going straight." So the name of Fairholme was becoming a household word—was in everybody's mouth, from the peer's to the tout's.

Two years before, as he trotted about Newmarket Heath on his bay cob, not twenty people knew who the slim lad was who was riding about at John Butler's side. Now, every "welsher" in the ring, and every gipsy and card-seller out of it, was as familiar with the face of his Grace of Fairholme as with his own.

His stud grew on his hands, and now he had some thirty animals in training on the Downs. He had gained a reputation for being lucky, and people followed his lead as that of some Wizard whose magic wand could open a new El Dorado with a tap. In the last season, at Newmarket, Ascot, Goodwood, and Doncaster, he had carried all before the tide of his resistless luck. And with what skill he picked out the winner from the mazes of a leviathan handicap, like the Cesarewitch or the Cambridge-shire; with what readiness he calculated the odds, two or three against the field, a treble event, or summed up the total of his book! How cool he was amidst the din and roar of the ring, unmoved by the excitements of the race—collected when men of twice his age lost their heads!

"I lay my wits to be worth forty thousand a year to me in the ring," he said. And his friends and followers assented in

chorus. Jack Childers, and Charles Mortimer, and Fitzbuddle, and others of our acquaintance, were still companions in his pursuits, followers of his luck, and altogether of his set. But what hosts of new friends he had made! Colonel Hardinge, of the racecourses and the Life Guards (Green); Captain Shairp, of the billiard saloons; old Lord Epsom and young Lord Essendene, of the hazard tables in England and elsewhere; and many other equally clever and reputable noblemen and gentlemen, fond of the national sport, were very proud to speak of the Duke as their friend. His affability, goodness of heart, and off-handed, generous manner everybody talked about. The amount of his fortune was vastly exaggerated. He became the lion of the racecourses, the "lucky Duke," the leader of the Young England party. In one word, Fairholme was the rage. On the racecourses, the people crowded and pushed one another in their efforts to obtain a glimpse of him, and cheered him when his horses won. In society they did the same thing, after a less tumultuous and less hearty fashion; but they did it, nevertheless. The sun of fortune shone splendidly on him, and he bore all his honours well. Pedagogue had just won his first two-year-old engagement. The Malton meeting was in a few days to be held. His house was ready for the reception of his friends. Half the world was coming to Malton Park; and with it, Charles Mortimer.

CHAPTER III.

AN EVENING STROLL.

WE left Reginald Erle standing before the cabinet in the library at the Chase, with the two portraits in his hands. Astonished—fearful—yet hopeful in some degree that the mystery of his parentage was about to be cleared up, he stood comparing the miniatures with the most minute attention for some considerable space of time. He had placed them on an open desk, side by side and close together, that he might detect the slightest difference, if any existed. He turned them over and examined their backs: they were precisely the same in size and pattern. The only difference by which they might be distinguished was, that upon the back of his own locket were inscribed the initials "R. M." and a date. The chain of thin gold, by which Lavelle had suspended the trinket round

his neck a dozen years before, was still attached to it. He reversed them again, placing them before him with their faces upwards; and he gazed at them until the mist of indistinctness rose before his eyes, and the two pictures merged and blended into one: then it first struck him that that one was no other than Robert Mortimer. Young—fresh coloured—different, and yet the same. There was hardly room for doubt or uncertainty, the likeness, he now perceived, was so great.

And then, the initials "R. M." It was so. The crimson flush mounted again to his cheeks—a feeling of faintness came over him—he staggered back into a chair.

The ringing of the dressing bell recalled him to his senses somewhat. With a faint heart, and a dull heavy weight of care on his mind, he put back one of the portraits in the cabinet, and taking his own in his hand carried it with him to his chamber.

The second bell awoke him from the painful reverie into which he had insensibly fallen. He made a hasty toilet, and, composing himself as much as he was able, proceeded to take his usual seat at the dinner-table.

"You look quite ill, Mr. Erle," Miss Margaret remarked. "I am sure you do not feel well."

"Thank you, yes. A slight headache—nothing more. The heat, I think."

"You should not ride out in the middle of the day, Erle," said Sir Harold; "there is never any necessity for doing so. The weather is too hot for anybody except the Red Indians. I am sure of that."

So dinner passed off much as it was wont to do. After the ladies had left the room, and Reginald had sat for some little time with Sir Harold, and they had finished their regular quantum of the Baronet's claret—the worthy old gentleman swallowing about four glasses of the wine to his junior's one—they strolled out on to the terrace in front of the house with their cigars, at the Baronet's proposal.

"Malton meeting is next week," said Sir Harold. "God bless me, how time does pass when a man gets on the wrong side of sixty! Why it seems but a few days since it was Malton races last—aye, and but a few weeks or months, say, since I first ran that old Peccadillo there."

They sat at either end of a garden seat, so placed as to command the prettiest pro-

spect of the park, and puffed their cigars for a minute or two in silence. The heart of the old Baronet was for the time in the past, and Erle did not care to disturb his train of thought until he should break the silence himself.

"I suppose," he said, presently, "we shall have a lot of people here; and Margaret tells me that at the Park they are going to be very full."

"I hope we shall have finer weather than last year for the meeting," said Erle.

"Yes, I hope so. I recollect that Robert—"

Erle started at the name—it was the thing uppermost in his thoughts at that moment.

The Baronet proceeded. "I recollect my brother Robert got wet and caught a cold, and then called himself a fool for going to the races at all."

"I remember he had a bad cold," said Erle.

"Ought to have brought his macintosh from town, you know. Of course we had to put the ladies inside the carriages. I don't know yet whether he is coming this year."

"Indeed?"

"No, he has not made up his mind, Margaret says. There was nothing about it in the letter we read of his, was there?"

"No, I do not recollect—that is, no. I am sure no mention was made of it."

"Charlie is going to stay with Fairholme. Perhaps Robert is going there too. My brother is a great admirer of a duke; political dukes he is particularly fond of."

"Yes?" said Erle.

The old Baronet was very talkative that day after dinner. The pleasant evening breeze, the soothing influence of his cigar and the claret, all made him inclined to be communicative.

"I hope Robert will come down. I want to have a talk with him. I want Mabel and Charlie to be married without any further delay—say, in six months or so. It is a strange thing," Sir Harold continued, "I have never had any children of my own to bother me; and yet I have been plagued all my life with other people's. There was my old friend the late Marquis of Malton left me—with one other person who died before the Marquis—guardian to his son. I was no more than any other of his neighbours to him. I was never on very intimate terms with him. We moved in very different sets."

"My dear Sir Harold," said Erle, warmly, "you owed your onerous charge to your honourable fame, as I have often heard."

The Baronet bowed his head in assent.

"They felt they could trust me, I know. I accepted the charge, and I did all I could for the boy. Then old Sir Everard Despencer must confide to me the guardianship of Miss Mabel. He and I were very old friends, and that charge I undertook also. Then, as I had been always a sort of father—certainly more than elder brother—to Robert, I was, in a manner, saddled with Mr. Charles, his son. So, as you see, without ever having had any family of my own, I have always had to take care of brats of other men."

"They are now all grown up, sir," said Erle, "and—"

"And that only makes two of them more troublesome. I must confess, also, my anxiety that Malton—Fairholme as he is now—should do well. And Sir Everard having often expressed a strong desire that Charlie should marry Mabel—even putting it into the last codicil he made, as a dying wish—I am anxious they should be married, as I believe they are as fond of one another as can be expected. They have always been brought up with the notion they were to be married to one another when they were old enough, and now, if Robert and Charlie come down, I think, with Miss Mabel's assistance, we shall fix the day, and make the arrangements that are necessary. Whenever Charlie—if he lives—comes into it, the property will be a fine one. And, if I were a young man, Mabel Despencer is just the woman I should choose for a wife."

"Oh! you are here," said Miss Margaret; "we could not think where it was you had got to."

"Smoking a cigar out of doors, you see," replied her brother.

"Don't you think it is rather chilly for you to be sitting. It is not like walking about, you know."

"I am ready to go in, my dear," said the old Baronet, submissively.

He rose from his seat, and gave his arm to his sister.

"In the morning," he said to Erle, "we will write a letter to Robert, and ask him to come down if he can."

"We mean to ask Mr. Campbell too, Harold, if he can come. He likes plenty of society."

"Very well, Margaret, my dear. I shall not go near the racing, I dare say—"

"Nonsense—nonsense, Harold, I am sure you will, and enjoy the fun as much as ever you did."

Miss Margaret was always most anxious to cheer her brother up, and rouse him from his unnatural supineness.

"You forget, my dear—I can't see the horses five yards off."

"Never mind, you will come, and enjoy it too, I promise you. Why, Malton meeting would not seem itself without you, you know."

"I have given way to the boys now, Margaret. I suppose the patronage of Fairholme will float it after I have left off going."

They walked once or twice up and down the broad gravel path, and then disappeared through a French window that opened into the drawing-room.

Erle lighted another cigar, and strolled through the Chase in the direction of Madingley. He walked on and on, absorbed completely in his reflections, until he found himself at the gate in the wall abutting on the grounds of the parsonage. He hesitated about going in to see his friends. He hardly felt inclined for society, however agreeable and cheerful it might be. He decided to stroll on through the village, and round by another way to the house again.

When he came to the church, abruptly turning a corner, he met Mr. Horatio Grobey, who had walked from Malton to Madingley, smoking his cigar in the pleasant summer evening, just as Erle had walked thither from the Chase.

"Good evening, my dear sir. Beautiful evening for a walk. I declare I am quite enjoying it after the hot day."

Erle wished him good evening civilly, and was walking on in the direction of the Chase, not caring just then for the company of the financial agent.

"If you will allow me, my dear sir, I will walk with you. I have nowhere in particular to walk to. I hate to be out without an object in view, and without a soul to speak to."

Erle could not do other than assent to Mr. Grobey's proposal.

"Country people will never go out for a walk, I find. Nothing will induce Johnson to stir after he has once sat down to his pipe and his gin and water."

"Indeed?" said Erle.

"Nothing, sir. The bucolic mind has its peculiarities, Mr. Erle. That is one of them."

Mr. Grobey, as they walked along, gave Erle his opinions of land as an investment, and of the various ways by which rents might be improved, and the revenues of landed proprietors augmented.

"I may speak with some small authority on financial and economic topics, Mr. Erle," said he, with his deep voice—the very counterpart of his brother's—and with a splendidly inflated manner. "I am almost a self-made man. Education, of course, I have to thank my father for; but nothing more, I can assure you. The gentleman with whom I act in financial negotiations is well known to you by name, Mr. Hardwick. He is the owner of a select and remunerative stud of horses, and he manages the money difficulties of half the young nobles on the turf. It was through our connection with racing, sir, that we became acquainted with the Duke of Fairholme."

"The racecourse seems to be a great leveller of ordinary social distinctions, Mr. Grobey," said Erle.

"Racing is a fine sport, sir," replied the financier, parrying the question thus thrust home.

They walked on some distance farther.

"When I inquired after your brother and Mrs. Grafton," said Erle, "at Mr. Johnson's, there was one question I wished to put, but did not like to ask it there."

"Indeed, Mr. Erle," returned the gentleman of the Stock Exchange, "pray put it now, and I will do my best to afford you information or advice. My advice is much sought after in relation to financial operations. Does it relate to an investment?"

"No, Mr. Grobey, I have no money to trouble me, and therefore no need for investments, eligible or the reverse. It was to ask you about—"

"Yes," said Grobey, encouragingly.

"That poor unfortunate girl."

"Bertie Grafton?"

"Yes; does her aunt hold any communication with her?"

"My brother was a poor infatuated fool. What he saw in her I never could discover."

"As I knew her, she was gentle and beautiful—and—and innocent," said Erle.

"I don't know that she is not innocent now," said Grobey. "I never wanted to get

married myself, but poor Bob—he's all poetry—all soul, sir. It's his professional education that has done it for him. If he had been brought up to the Stock Exchange, as I was, he would have had no more sentiment than I have."

"He felt the shock very much, I believe," Erle said, sadly.

"Made a perfect fool of himself, ran off to Scotland after her—had a row with Mr. Mortimer about her—wanted to bring her back, and all that sort of thing—disconsolate lover—old aunt brought to her grave, and so on; but the girl would not come—so he came back—didn't appear in public for a month."

"He loved her," exclaimed Erle.

"'Serious indisposition of the eminent tragedian' on the bills and in the papers—most made of it by the manager of the 'Vic'—reappearance in one month."

"Poor unfortunate girl! Poor Bertie!" said Erle. "Who would have supposed it of her?"

"'Pon my soul, I do not know what you mean. I think the young woman is soundly lucky," said the vulgar man of business.

"Mr. Grobey!" cried Erle, in a tone of surprise and horror.

"Oh, my brother has been in the habit of going on in just the same way about her. Unfortunate—wretched—madness—and all the rest. Why, she loved Mr. Mortimer, and I suppose he liked her or he would not have taken her off with him to Scotland, of all places in the world," continued Mr. Horatio Grobey. "I must say I think she is very well off, and most doosidly lucky."

"Sir!" exclaimed Earl, with the flush of honest anger on his cheek, "her honour—her good name—"

"Pooh, my dear sir, you don't understand the case. *She is his wife.*"

"What!" cried Erle. "Has he married her?"

"Well, he does not know it, I dare say, or did not intend it if he does; but they are married—"

"Married, without his knowing it?"

"As hard and fast as if two archbishops had read the service at St. George's, Hanover-square. As I told my brother, I have examined all the evidence, and by the Scotch law Bertie Grafton is Mr. Charles Mortimer's wife, or Horatio Grobey will admit that he's a fool, or—what is the same

thing—mistaken for the first time in his life."

"Great heaven," thought Erle, "if this is true, how will Mabel and his father and Sir Harold bear such a blow!"

ON A SPRIG OF HEATH.

I TAKE it up with quickened breath,
And tears that rise unbidden—
'Tis but a sprig of faded heath,
Among old letters hidden.
But fresh and clear comes back the past,
With one day still lamented:
Oh! Kate, that foolish word of haste,
So bitterly repented!

Shake off the fit. Read you wise books
On woman's fond beguiling;
See how she ruins with her looks,
And saddens with her smiling;
How clownish heart and crowned head
Have rued her promise broken!
Oh! Katie—were this memory dead!
Or else that word unspoken!

See, the world's lovers file their way
Adown the page historic;
Rehearse their stories, grave and gay,
In Attic or in Doric;
Proclaim the lessons of their fate,
And with their cautions warn me:
Ah! if it were not yet too late—
Kate, would you only scorn me?

Hearken the maxims of the wise:
No dangers half so fearful
As lurk beneath a woman's eyes,
In laughing mood or tearful.
And think how useful 'tis to know
That half the world God gave us
Was only made in mocking show,
To ruin and enslave us!

We'll scoff and scorn the while lads sing
Of love among the lilies.
Woman is but an idle thing—
Queen Bess to Amaryliss.
We'll plant in every manly breast
All woman's tender graces,
And try to do without the rest—
Kind hearts and loving faces.

Why, what have I to do with love,
Whose spring of love is ended?
Could ever five and thirty move
Where twenty-five offended?
Can I renew what once has been,
With hope and purse both scanty?
Speak—Love's own queen at bright sixteen,
My queen at six and twenty!

POST-HORSES.—PART II.

THERE is a large rambling room in the inn at Arezzo. The landlord, crossing it to speak to us, seems to rise up bodily out of the darkness. His words are not exhilarating. "We *may* find horses," but he appears to doubt it; and "Do the *signori* know that

the country is infested with banditti?" In a sunken voice—mysteriously, as though he feared the brigands were within hearing—he relates their last lawless deed; even suggests sending back to Florence for a military escort. Is this suggestion made with an eye to business? Does he wish us to tarry at Arezzo till the escort comes? However that may be, his advice is given in vain, and next day we push bravely on. Truly it is wild posting! At one place, amidst much noise and more gesticulation, when three horses have been put to, and boys are hanging on to them to keep them quiet, the fourth appears with the rider already mounted—comes from the stable-yard with a formidable clatter of hoofs, snorts, prances, wheels round and round upright upon hind-legs, but is somehow or other caught in the rope harness; a knot is tied, the lads let go the other horses, and—kicking, plunging, heads well down, postillion slashing at them with his whip, driving two before him, tugging with might and main at the hard-mouthed brutes behind—off we go in a mad gallop, the top-heavy carriage swaying from side to side, the travellers holding on in terror. And no harm comes of it all! We live to tell the tale. By and by we console ourselves with the thought that the banditti will find us hard to catch.

In the village market-places groups of men are collected together. We overtake companies of peasants on the road, and pass them, wondering a little whither it is that all the country-side is flocking. Evening draws on; the horses grow wilder and wilder; they reach the end of the post-fagged enough, but each fresh pair is, at starting, more unmanageable than the last. There is a long delay, too, at the last post of all; so long that our hearts begin to quake at the dusky twilight drive before us: we would so much prefer being robbed, or even murdered, in open day! At length our patience is rewarded by somewhat steadier steeds, and things go on more smoothly. It grows darker and darker—a hill looms high above us, and the postillion pulls up. Oh! what is he waiting for? In vain we call to him, his answer is unintelligible. We feel that the dreaded moment has arrived, and summon all our courage. Suddenly the man gives a long musical cry—a signal! what else *can* it be? *He is in league with the banditti!* The cry is repeated, then answered from the distance;

but the second time of hearing it we recognize familiar syllables: the innocent word "*Bovi*," shapes itself to our affrighted ears, and the meek-eyed oxen come slowly towards us out of the darkness! Extra help was needed to drag the heavy carriage up the hill. Up we go, higher and higher, with quiet hearts now, and the short opal twilight is over and night come; but one star hangs in the dark blue over Perugia, glowing and burning there until, as we watch it, others come out, and the city on the hill is star-crowned. There is little in "my" Perugia save the shadowy outline of tower and Campanile, the outline of the Templar's monastery, and that star; and all—star, city, Campanile—are not on earth, but together in the sky. Thither we go also, ever higher and higher; reaching at last, however, nothing more heavenly than our inn, and the dreamless sleep of weary travellers.

The next day, leaving the town early, we pass under the statue of Pope Julius standing in the piazza, the hand uplifted in the attitude of blessing. The city looks still and peaceful in the early morning, as if in truth a blessing rested on it; but we plunge downwards into the mists that are climbing the hill. Here and there they roll aside, or allow the view to become visible through a rent in their soft veil, as they struggle with the sun smiling patiently, until they disperse at last, subdued by his warm radiance. By the time we reach the valley, and by the time there is no more view to be seen, the morning mists are gone, and the hot hours of the forenoon begin to glow. Again to-day the market-places are crowded—again to-day peasants travel in companies along the road; but now we meet instead of passing them, for all faces are turned towards Perugia. The men wear cloaks flung gracefully over one shoulder, high peaked hats or low crowned ones with broadest brims, from under which they scan us curiously with dark, restless eyes: all appear occupied with some common interest, but they seem too subdued for energy. Nowhere in the Papal states does energy strike us as a characteristic of the people. On inquiring the reason of this gathering from all parts of Umbria towards the city on the hill, we are startled at the reply. A tall, lean peasant, driving before him three lean cows, stops for an instant as he passes us.

"Why do you all flock thus to Perugia?" we ask.

He stares; then, in a hollow voice, gives the answer in four words, abruptly: "*La fiera de' morti!*" and so goes on.

The fair of the dead! They will climb the hill at night, then, as we did yesterday. These melancholy figures will mount up through the darkness to the star-crowned city, and be joined there by the melancholy ghosts—spirits of dead peasants returned to earth to trade and chaffer once more in the market, and drive a ghostly bargain with their brethren who are still alive? Imagination paints the scene in mysterious colours. The explanation is commonplace. It wants but three days to the first of November, the Festival of All Saints, when masses are everywhere celebrated for the dead; and on All Saints Day one of the great Perugian fairs commences—hence its ominous name.

Our minds are still disturbed by fears of robbery—fears of possible bloodshed; everywhere we meet peasants on the road, and to our eyes the Italian peasant is *so* like the Italian brigand—such, at least, as we have been accustomed to see him on the stage! Everywhere, too, the road is patrolled with soldiers, whose presence excites in us, strange to say, only greater alarm; for, unless danger really existed, would the soldiers be there at all? So we reason; and at last—at a gloomy part of the road lying between high precipitous banks, one of the roads through the pass of Terni, a winding road with sharp, sudden turns round the face of out-jutting rocks—we do indeed fall in with banditti! But we meet and pass them unmolested: for those it is our luck to encounter are captives—three men with hands bound, and riding between a guard of soldiers. The group suits the picture in which it is set—suits the rocky pass, the gloomy evening hour, and the storm slowly gathering overhead; yet for all that, the situation is scarcely melodramatic enough. Beyond the fact that they are bound, the brigands do look *very* like the peasants. They are talking composedly to one another. One of them calls out something to the postillion as we pass, who shouts back in reply; whereat all three prisoners laugh loudly. The soldiers also chat carelessly among themselves: one is eating chestnuts.

At Terni, I remember not so much *the* waterfall, as one that fell from heaven for

our especial benefit—a steady down-pour straight from the sky; uninterrupted rain, continuing for twelve hours, and threatening to wash away the little town altogether. Under shelter, in the inn-yard, a lame man sat and played upon a violin. To what is owing the subtle influence of a stringed instrument? Why should it reach the heart, and wake a feeling which the sweetest of other music leaves still asleep? In fire-side journeys there are quite other sign-posts along the road than those which pointed the way when first we travelled it. The objects of interest that mark our stopping-places are no longer "lions" alluded to by Murray, but such trivial circumstances as touched our feelings at the time. And well, indeed, that it should be so, else were all places alike to all, and the whole world monotonous; else had I no Perugia of my own, but only one, the common property of other tourists too. As it is, I remember "my" Perugia by a star; and at Terni the sound of the lame man's violin amidst the splashing rain drowns in my ears the rush and murmur of the falls. For, of course, we waited till the weather cleared, and then we duly "did" the falls, wandered in the ilex groves, rode our donkeys through the gardens of Queen Caroline's villa, and came back to the inn tired out, but full of regrets that only two days more of this pleasant journey lay before us. And the next day's journey nearly proves our last—not only on the road to Rome, but on the road of life itself! For at one post-house, on the outskirts of a town, and on the top of a hill, with a river running far below us, horses wilder-looking than ever are brought out, and surlier, more uncouth people than we have yet met with, stand before the inn to see us start. We eye the horses fearfully, and accompany their various kicks and plunges with a duet of little screams—poor little screams which are unheeded here, and do not meet with a quick response in the shape of a torrent of good-humoured patois, as has hitherto been the case. Finally, there arises a sudden commotion. A huge black animal takes it into his head to back, whereupon the others back also; the postillions, not yet mounted, rush to their heads, but without avail. Quite as helpless as any of the other luggage, and perched up upon the high box-seat far beyond all possibility of quick descent, we feel a sudden dip of the hinder wheels: one of them is

actually *on* the edge of a precipice, none the less frightfully steep that it slopes down in grassy ridges to the river. The men let go the horses; we hear them exclaim, with a shrug of the shoulders, "*E finito!*" and, as they coolly fold their arms, and stand still to see us "finished," we feel that, indeed, it is all over with us. The suspense, however, lasts but an instant. Shouting to the bystanders to trouble themselves not at all about the horses, but to lay hold upon the wheels instead and force them back, our courier himself sets the example as he speaks. In another moment the danger is averted, and we breathe again; looking at each other, however, with pale faces, and perhaps wishing just then, in our secret thoughts, that a paternal government *had* forced us to take the train from Florence.

That night we sleep at Civita Castellana. Whether we dream of the old Etruscan city, of "Lars Porsena of Clusium" and the great Etruscan army, or only of rough roads and perilous posting, I cannot say; for all memories of Civita Castellana centre around the fact that it is our last sleeping-place on the road to Rome. The next day we see the dome of St. Peter's—misty, distant, looking like the embodiment of a dream we have so often dreamt, seeming not real, but as though we were still in the heart of that dream itself, and could not wake. But we have no wish to wake. No goal ever set before us on our road satisfies us, when reached, as Rome satisfies us. In the old part of the city, near to Trajan's forum, we enter upon a charmed life in a villa whose walls are festooned with lemons, and whose little garden is fragrant with violets. Standing by each monument of mediæval Rome, the voice of ancient Rome echoes in our hearts. We do not "lionize" the baths of Caracalla, or visit, red guide-book in hand, the Palace of the Cæsars, or "do" the Coliseum; but we wander amongst the ruins until we learn them all by heart—live in daily familiar intercourse with them, and they grow to be our friends. When, five months after, we tear ourselves away, it is not so much that our hearts are left behind, as that Rome follows us, being from thenceforth a very part of our lives—a living memory.

But the wild posting melts into the distance, and is altogether a thing of the past; for the horses *were* taken off the road to Perugia—for that season, at least, if not

permanently—a few days after we had passed along it, and our return to Florence was by rail.

TABLE TALK.

THE VISCOUNTESS AMBERLEY has been acting as the spokeswoman of the Rights of Women party. Her ladyship, in this semi-official capacity, has given us her opinions in the form of a lecture upon the claims of her sex. And we may assume that Lord Amberley, her husband, endorses all she has said upon this vexed question, for he was present at the lecture, and "said a few words in support of his wife's views." Her ladyship claims, on behalf of her sex, "the restoration of the privileges due to girls under educational endowments; that they should have equal chance with boys of obtaining the highest education; that all professions should be open to them; that married women should have separate ownership of property; that a widow should be legally recognized as the natural guardian of her children; that the franchise should be extended to women; that political and social interest and work should be open equally to them; that public opinion should sanction for women every occupation good and suited to their strength; that there should be no legal subordination in marriage; and that the same wages should be given women for the same work." As will be seen from the foregoing summary of Lady Amberley's demands, the carrying into effect of the ten propositions to which she has reduced the rights and claims of women would be simply to revolutionize the existing state of the relations between the two sexes into which Providence has been pleased in his wisdom to divide the human race. They involve some very extraordinary changes in, and put forward some very new views of, woman's just sphere and proper mission in this world. But intermixed with a good deal of the impracticable—not to say the improper—is something of right and justice. To the first and second of Lady Amberley's propositions we can give our unfeigned assent and consent. They have been advocated, before her ladyship took them up, in the pages of our magazine. To one or two others of these propositions we are prepared to give our attentive consideration; but to the majority we can hardly give a serious thought. Their effect would be, under a system of

universal suffrage—for the women could outvote the men—to produce a gynocracy in which we might see a Lady Chancellor presiding in a female Court of Chancery over lady barristers, and at St. Stephen's over an assemblage of middle-aged peeresses elected by the votes of their countrywomen; for we can hardly hope that the hereditary system would be allowed to continue. Extend this gynarchical principle to every office, profession, and calling, and you have a notion of what the State would become were Lady Amberley's propositions pushed to extremes. Happily, the women of England are distinguished as much for their good sense as for their thousand and one other virtues and good qualities. They do not wish their condition to be materially changed. They will be satisfied with the little that is really in justice required, and they may rest assured that that little will speedily be accorded them by that stern monster and tyrant, the nineteenth century Englishman, their husband and their brother.

WILL SOME QUESTION-ASKING M.P. move for a return of the average number of persons in the habit of attending the several Sunday services of the City churches? These places of worship—offspring of the religious zeal of a remote and pious age—are now useless, and worse than useless: they “encumber the ground.” Many of them owe their endowment, some of them their erection, to the qualms of conscience felt by dying citizens of London, who were rich, and had lived lives not “ower gude.” They thought a policy of peace at any price the best they could pursue; and, consequently, gave to Mother Church the oyster, and the two shells to their children. These churches have their incumbents and their curates, their organists and choirs, clerks, sextons, and beadles. They are nearly all of them outwardly thriving, in very substantial repair, and are crowded together in a small area, and tucked into queer holes and corners of the great money-grubbing City. Dive in and out of the narrow streets and lanes within ten minutes' walk of the Bank of England, and you will discover them in plenty, useless and unused. Trees without fruit, churches without people, and preaching to the empty air. No visitor to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge can have failed to remark the large number of churches in those towns; but the City of

London is still richer in ecclesiastical edifices. But, with the vast increase of wealth, and commercial activity, and business of all kinds, the private houses of the merchants and their clerks, which were once common enough in the City, have given place to offices and warehouses; and hardly anybody—except a few porters and house-keepers—is left in the City. So the churches are without congregations. Would it not be possible to transfer clergy and endowments to that great East-end, with which so few people are acquainted, and in which there are heathens and savages enough to give work to the energy of a dozen missionary societies?—in the midst of which are a hopeless ignorance, a helpless poverty, and an utter Godlessness, terrible in a Christian land!

A CORRESPONDENT writes: “The following epitaph, which I do not recollect ever seeing in print before, is to be found in the beautiful churchyard of Sutton, in Shropshire. It has the appearance of modern origin about it.” Joking epitaphs, like the joking sermons once of tolerably frequent occurrence, are now so entirely out of vogue among us, that we insert this curious specimen for the amusement of our readers:—

“HERE LIES THE BODY OF CHARLES KEETLEY,
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE NOV. 4, 1857,
AGED 63 YEARS.

Here lies Mr. C. Keetley,
Now done for completely;

But before he got into this hole,
He made bad puns so neatly,
And good jokes so sweetly,

He was reckoned uncommonly droll.
We don't know if it's right,
But they say the last night

He was driving along with his fun;
And the very last word that ever was heard
Was certainly meant for a pun.

Now, o'er his grave his friends may rave,
And grieve till all of them choke;
But 't will be very queer

If his ghost don't appear

At twelve every night for a joke.”

The most striking point in connection with it is, that such an inscription should have been placed on a tombstone so recently as 1857, only thirteen years ago. Clergymen and cemetery boards so commonly sit as censors upon such productions, that, if offered by the relatives or friends of deceased notabilities, they are very much more likely to be consigned to the waste paper basket than to be made perpetual in

stone or marble. We recollect hearing quite lately of an instance in which two disconsolate parents, having lost their little boy, aged two years, proposed to place the following inscription on the tombstone they erected to his memory:—

“There was one vacant harp in Heaven,
And ’twas unto our darling given.”

MR. GOLDWIN SMITH, too, must throw his stone from across the Atlantic at the author of “Lothair.” The *ci-devant* Oxford professor was at a first glance put down by everybody as the prototype of the Don in Mr. Disraeli’s much-discussed novel. Perhaps it was known to more people than the author suspected that there had been some ill-feeling between the statesman and the scholar. Still it was by no means proved that the “social parasite” of “Lothair” was to be identified with Mr. Goldwin Smith. We might have left the matter in doubt, and soon forgotten all about it; but Mr. Smith will not allow this. He writes an angrily sarcastic letter from the Cornell University, State of New York, and in it he says—having taken the character in the picture to himself—

“You well know that if you had ventured openly to accuse me of any social baseness, you would have had to answer for your words.”

And, further, he adds—

“Your aspersions can touch no man’s honour: they are the stingless insults of a coward.”

This very sharp and not very justifiable letter is addressed to the Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli, but sent by his “obedient servant” to two morning papers for publication, in which form the author of “Lothair” probably first saw it. Now, Mr. Goldwin Smith, is this a dignified course for a gentleman, a scholar, and something of a philosopher to pursue? You were known to the world as a clever, accomplished, and very “Radical” young man; and to a smaller circle as somewhat more than all these. You are one of the best living writers of English prose, and you ran away to Yankee land to write a history of the United States, which, if you finish it, will be the best history of that great country. And after all you ought not to be quite certain that you are the “Oxford professor” of “Lothair.” Would you not have gained rather than lost by bearing in silence the taunt—if it were meant for you? In the face of all the reviews, favourable and unfavourable, and of

a first edition of 7,000 sold; after being compared to a haberdasher’s assistant by “Blackwood,” and called a coward by Mr. Goldwin Smith; after all that has been said and will yet be said about the book—is it not more than in a slight degree probable that its author wishes in his heart that the MS. of “Lothair” lay at this moment, unpublished, in his desk?

BUTTERCUPS WERE MENTIONED (at p. 462 of the volume for 1869) in reference to Nature’s consummate taste in the harmonious blending of yellows and greens. Of course, the common buttercup or bulbous crowfoot (*ranunculus bulbosus*) is meant; for there are other varieties of the species—the creeping buttercup (*ranunculus repens*), and the yellow meadow crowfoot (*ranunculus acris*), and Wordsworth’s favourite, the lesser celandine (*ranunculus ficaria*), and other “gold-eyed kingcups fine,” who are the country cousins of the cultivated *ranunculus* of horticulture. Who was the poet who called the common buttercup “the varnish’d buttercup”? It was an excellent descriptive metaphor. There is a radiant, glossy varnish on that simple flower that makes it glisten wondrously in the sunshine. Country children hold up its five petals against one another’s chin or cheek, and say, “Are you fond of butter?” and, if there is a yellow glow reflected on the skin—which, of course, there is, as vivid as though Maclise had painted it—then you are said to have a proneness for butter. Here is a subject for our painters of homely *genre* subjects. Though, if I were a landscape painter, I would assuredly try my brush at imitating certain stiff clay meadows now seen from my windows, and all ablaze with gold; and I would call my canvas “Buttercup Pastures.” In the foreground, the smaller daisies would show themselves among the green and gold; and these lines, from Thomas Campbell, would serve as a quotation for the catalogue:—

“Ye waft me to summers of old,
When the earth teen’d around me with fairy de-
light,
And when daisies and buttercups gladdened the
sight

Like treasures of silver and gold.”

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The authors of the articles in ONCE A WEEK reserve to themselves the right of translation.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 130.

June 25, 1870.

Price 2d.

THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY.

BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

CHAPTER XXVIII.



MANY

FACES
— female
faces—
turned
towards
the end of
the table
where the
new ar-
rival had
seated
herself.
There
was some-
thing
showy, a
sort of
theatrical

glitter about her, which even a lady cannot altogether conceal: for the stage leaves its mark on everything.

The host was put out, and explained to his neighbours that this “was a lady whom he asked—a person of good birth and position, and who had been ‘reduced;’ and his friend Benbow was most pressing to have something done for her. So he had asked her here, and she would give them a ‘reading,’ or something of the kind.” Meanwhile the lady herself was quite composed—calmly at home. There were gentlemen near her, always Samaritans to those outcasts of the other sex. All these soon found out what a clever, interesting creature this

was: so self-possessed and ladylike, so full of wit almost. One young lord who was next her was quite enchanted with her gifts—her sweet, low voice, and winning manners. Lord Reginald Whikers was a most agreeable youth himself, high in favour with the surrounding ladies; but who devoted himself now to the lady beside him. This created a prejudice; and very soon were heard depreciating questions, and very soon all about her was known, and the remark made, “How curious of the Duke!”

But the trial—the test—was to come, when the ladies went upstairs and left the gentlemen. What was to become of her then? She knew no one; but, as the ladies rose, the Duke, a true nobleman and gentleman, met her at the door—welcomed her cordially.

“So glad to see you here, Miss Effingham.”

“Mrs. Effingham,” she said, smiling. “I am a married lady.”

“Oh, indeed!” he said.

“You know that on the stage we are allowed all sorts of privileges as to names and addresses.”

He then stopped one of his greater lady guests, and introduced the actress kindly; not wishing her to make her way, solitary and friendless, into the drawing-room prairies. “I know I can rely on you,” he said.

They were all assembled in the drawing-room, that band of pitiless ladies—as they seemed to her—and whose looks she flung back with interest. She had no shyness, showed not the least discomfort, or that she was not at her ease; and seemed not in the least to require the aid of her lady protector. Yet to fight a battle of that kind, with whatever gifts, is almost impossible. The tacit league is made. Had she been humble and grateful for patronage, they would have welcomed her gladly. But she held her own, talked calmly, and firmly gave her opinion; and

when some statement was made, quite inaccurate, she coldly set the speaker right. At last the gentlemen appeared at the door—dropping in in skirmishing order—half shy, half simpering—according to the invariable pattern in such case made and provided. Then came her turn: then all her brilliancy seemed to lighten up, and in a few minutes there was a group. Now this gentleman, now that, desired to be presented. And she grew witty and gay and brilliant, and they were reporting to each other in different parts of the room what piquant, pleasant things she said. Now she was to have her allies who would stand by her. The ladies were all deserted, or partially so—left to the attentions of feeblers men, who eagerly seized on the opportunity not to be obtained before. She was so “successful,” that the Duke himself began to think that the asking her had not been such a bad idea, and might add to the attractions of the fête.

One of the gentlemen presently discovered that she sang, and went to apprise his host, and get him to put due pressure on.

“It will not be worth making a fuss about, if I should wish to decline it: so with all my heart!” and she went over to the piano.

The wondering ladies “sniffed” disdainfully at her “coolness,” and were amazed at hearing a tender, delicious voice—full, rich, sonorous, and full of feeling—issue from her crimson lips. It was some little pathetic story vocalized, and she would have delighted the composer had he been present. She hardly took the trouble to accompany herself in the ordinary way. Her fingers seemed to touch the keys mechanically—very much as the feet walk; but her voice told the history with a sort of deep tragedy which affected all.

When it was over, the host came up, and thanked her warmly for the pleasure she had given them. The young lord who had been so attracted by her was enthusiastic, and went about praising her perfections, exciting even the well-tried patience of the dowagers. Finally, the evening finished, after the usual fashion at country houses, and all went solemnly to bed.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. BENBOW, at home, had been keeping his lonely vigils, his eyes bent in that far-off direction; and, though the Sword was still swinging slowly over his head, in punkah fashion, he did not take

much heed of it. That was about nine o'clock. But gradually, as the night wore, there came also that terrible magnifying-glass of the small hours, which enlarges everything to almost appalling proportions. Then he began to see—much as he would insects in a drop of water—awful shadows, as of coming dangers; the overwhelming precipice on whose edge he stood; the excessive peril from “that woman,” who was, as it were, standing over a barrel of gun-powder, a torch in her hand. How could he feel easy for a second while she was there? Some accident might fire the train. How could he count on his son keeping to his promise? If the Duke should be taken ill suddenly, and his daughter be sent for; or if that daughter should change her mind, indignant at losing her pleasure, and, wishing to assert herself, set off with her husband for Banff, the whole would be disclosed—blown up with a terrific crash! The idea made him tremble, and a perspiration broke out on his face. This suspense was to go on for a week or ten days, so he could not endure it all that time. His nights would be one long protracted nightmare. This ever-approaching disgrace—in short, thatswinging Sword—it would be better far to have the hair cut and let the weapon fall, and end it for ever. It was folly—stupidity of the rankest sort—ever to have let them out of his sight.

With morning he had started off on his road. As he travelled along, he debated this point in a thousand ways: whether he should go to his son's, or take the bolder course of going to the Duke's, placing himself there behind the ramparts, as it were—a bold, open defence. The former course would expose him to suspicion; and, as was characteristic of him through life, he chose the bold game.

He sent a telegram to the Duke on behalf of him, and found himself at the station of the place that evening. The Duke's carriage was waiting; and he asked the servant who was staying there?—was his son coming? To his relief he found that he was not there, and was not expected. He was almost sorry that he had gone there now; and his heart sank within him, as he thought of the woman whom he must now meet, and to whom he must act a part as histrionic as any she had ever played on the official boards.

When he came up after dinner, and all

were gathered in the drawing-room, a lady was singing, and the rich notes came floating to him as he ascended the stairs. But he was not prepared for what he saw as he entered the brilliant rooms. Half the company gathered round the piano, the rest hushed in stillness, while the actress sang. Her melodious voice thrilled even him: it was one of her plaintive ballads, a touching story; and her eyes, as he entered, wandered over to him and recognized him. But he saw, with mystification and misgiving for the result of any future conflict, that the apparition made no difference—did not cause even a little start. All were so absorbed that no notice was taken of him, and the host put up his hand in a warning way to beg for quietness.

Then she had finished. He saw that she was quite one of the household, and had established herself triumphantly. How strange this was, he felt; and it seemed to weigh on him—a judgment, or some shape of retribution—that she should thus hold a position, unconsciously to all, so nearly approaching to what she was entitled.

Now she came forward to greet him; now, with the softness and most gracious unconsciousness—perfect actress that she was—that there was any secret between them.

"I am glad you have come," said the host—"shaken yourself free of your papers and books; and you were still more lucky in coming in just as Mrs. Effingham was singing that charming song. It looks as though *she* was the attraction."

"Oh," she said, coldly, "Mr. Benbow knew well that I was to be here: we had several confidential talks over the matter. He once came behind the scenes to see me."

"Halloa, Benbow! this is nice work!"

Mr. Benbow coloured, not at this "rallying" him, as it is called, but at the bold, hostile tone of this allusion. It almost frightened him, this air of superiority, which boded badly for her bearing in future.

"Mrs. Effingham likes a little joke—she is welcome to have it at my expense."

"No one knows better than Mr. Benbow that it was no joking matter that brought him there: He knows what his attitude was to me, and what he came to ask of me."

"Ah, this is all very sly. For shame, Benbow! And was this recently, Mrs. Effingham?"

"Since his son's marriage."

Mr. Benbow knew not what to say. This cold, vindictive woman's eye was upon him, and seemed as if it would accept no conventional compromise. Yet he faltered out—

"I am sure it would be no harm for me to do what all the world is doing—admire—bring one's homage to the feet of Miss, or Mrs., Effingham."

She looked at him with the most un concealed scorn, drawing herself up ever so haughtily. Contempt, joined with an air of mastery, was in her face.

"I will not let you carry it off in that way," she said. "My character is too precious to me to have it endangered by these little fictions. I don't want to have the honour of such an adorer. Come, there must be an open confession made. Was it business, or the ridiculous pretence that you describe, that brought you to see me?"

"You sent for me," said Mr. Benbow, trembling with anger. He had fallen into the trap.

"Ah, I had forgotten," she said, acting admirably; "you are perfectly right; and, indeed, it is only owing to myself that this matter should be set right, which has fallen into such a curious complication. We must have it all explained from the beginning."

"Hear, hear!" said some of the gentlemen.

Some of the fine ladies looked on curiously, with their glasses up to their eyes, and whispering—"What a strange proceeding—what does it all mean?"

All eyes were bent on him.

"Come," said she, "explain it. Accept my proposal. I am quite content it should be known. Shall I begin? Better interpose now; because once I go so far as even to begin to mention the business, and you were to stop me, then the rest would be guessed in a second. Ah, you know that, Mr. Benbow! So take care."

But by this time his old sense and tact had returned, the face and manner had recovered its old training.

"I yield," he cried out, "and own it all. The thing speaks for itself, indeed. What would an old fellow like me have to do with genius and beauty. It was a little business of the most prosaic and practical nature, almost mercantile, that brought me to Mrs. Effingham. There, that is the truth. I deserved to be exposed, impostor that I am."

He stole a look at her, as if to ask her was this sufficient *amende*. She looked at

him contemptuously, and turned. She was satisfied. Everyone was vastly amused at this little exhibition. Gentlemen saying to each other in the smoking-room, "How queer it was," and that there was "something odd in the way those two went on!"

But there was there a certain cousin of the Duke's—a political woman, as they called her, but very different from the ladies who are proud to arrogate to themselves that title—who had real sense; her advice and assistance were valuable. Her name was Sheldon—a cold, "bluish gray" lady, who was said to be the Duke's brains-carrier. She had looked on thoughtfully at the little skirmish. She said nothing then; but when her eye rested on Mr. Benbow, he felt uncomfortable.

After the company had gone to bed that night, the Duke and Mrs. Sheldon talked together a few moments over the events of the day.

"Now, Duke," she said, "we are alone, tell me your policy."

"About what?" he asked.

"About that common actress. It is very curious and mysterious. When first she came I thought her a common, ordinary creature, that only wanted an opportunity to improve her chances in life by coming here; but, do you know, since this evening I have quite changed my opinion."

"Oh, she is quite a superior person," the Duke said, with a great air of wisdom; "I saw that from the first."

"I am sure you did; but it is this superiority that puzzles me—rather, I am quite certain about it. You saw that scene with Mr. Benbow? *She has some hold over him*, depend upon it."

"Who? Mrs. Effingham?"

"Yes. That woman! There is no other meaning in his behaviour. He knows more of her than he will admit."

"What, Benbow! Ah, very good! That is good! My dear cousin, I know Benbow ever so many years; he hadn't time for such acquaintances. Shall I tell you what I believe it to be, and what it will turn out to be? When we were staying with him he took half the theatre for her benefit; and he is so forgetful of things that are not business, that it is more than likely that he quite forgot to settle with her. That, in the profession, is considered terrible."

"My dear cousin, you are wiser than I am; but, still, I shall watch for myself."

But the wretched Mr. Benbow went to bed with a terrible weight at his heart. He saw too plainly that this woman had come there, as it were, for the purpose of torturing him. There was some mystery about it all which he could not follow—something beyond all those mysteries which he had hitherto brought to the test of reason, and happily and successfully solved. Why should she display this animosity and fury against him? The mere opposition to her claims was only what she might have expected, or any other person in her class. She was too intelligent and clever to take such an unreasonable offence.

Mr. Benbow was right in his presentiment that this was only the beginning.

At breakfast next morning she was sitting beside the Duke: Mr. Benbow opposite, glaring uneasily towards her. There the Sword was swinging slowly to and fro over his head, at which he glanced upwards uneasily, though no one else in the room could see it but he himself. The truth was, the Duke, a handsome showy man, who in his day had been *de par amours*, as Brantôme would say, considered himself still very "dangerous." Somehow he had never shone so perfectly, nor had his remarks seemed to "tell" so successfully, as since she had arrived. She was, indeed, a most interesting character—which very often, when translated, appears to mean a character that is interested in *you*. Mr. Benbow, engaged with a talkative lady next him, only caught snatches of the following conversation.

"I remember so well that night—and I was so nervous—and, shall I confess it, I was hoping to have heard some little compliment of yours. But it never came. I saw in your face that you had seen so much in your life, it could not be expected that you should be delighted with a poor country-town creature."

"Not at all. I was greatly struck, indeed, Mrs. Effingham; and I remember distinctly the remark made was, 'There was a lady!' Not considered very high praise, I dare say, on the boards; but to my ideas the very highest."

"Ah, had I but known that, or been told it at the time, even in a whisper, how happy it would have made me. I would have given the world that you should have *known* that I *was* a lady born and bred, and brought up to be a lady."

"So I heard," said he, "and on other

authority besides yours. I tell you frankly, Mrs. Effingham, that is one of the reasons we did ourselves the honour to ask you here. My son-in-law proved it to me. He was your first admirer, you know."

"Then why is not Lady Rosa, his wife, here? They all seemed to have expected her."

"Well, it *is* odd; and in fact we gave the party chiefly for them. They sent us some very odd sort of excuse, which I confess to not understanding. However, she is now her own mistress, as far as I am concerned; and they are quite at liberty to act according to their own judgment."

"I know the reason," she said in a low voice, "though I don't know whether I ought to tell you."

"You know the reason!"

People up and down the table noticed the strange air of confidence between the two, and wondered.

"One of your guests—whom I shall not name, but whom your own penetration will help you to guess—for reasons of his own, does not wish your daughter and I to meet."

"Benbow! How absurd, how ridiculous! But can you be sure of this, Mrs. Effingham?"

"By and by I shall prove it to you."

"How?"

"By simply asking him—putting it to him. I know now that he must have put some kind of pressure on them. Look," she added, growing more and more excited, "at his strange manner since he has been here—the change in him from his old coolness and calmness."

"It is very odd, certainly," the Duke said, profoundly bewildered, and suddenly bethinking him of Mrs. Sheldon's remarks last night. "Most singular indeed! He *is* changed—in a wonderful way, too. He was always so cold and impenetrable, so resolute in carrying out his plans. But what object," he asked in wonder, "could he have? Surely he could not venture on such a proceeding as to keep my own daughter from coming to my house?"

"Hush!" she said, "we shall talk of this again after breakfast."

Mr. Benbow was looking meaningfully towards them. He could not hear; but the look she gave him seemed to say, "It is going on; all in good time. The net is closing about you."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE Duke was a weak man, who, though he would have resented excessively the notion that he was proud, was sensitive—almost arrogant—as to any "freedom," as he termed them, taken with him or his position. That a man like Benbow should *attempt* to interfere with the arrangements of his household, the plans he had made in reference to his hospitalities, or the people he meant to entertain there—it was insufferable—*impertinent*! It explained what was otherwise quite unaccountable—what he had wondered at—the sudden self-excusals of his daughter and her husband, from whom he had been too haughty to ask any reason, but had merely said they might do just as they pleased. Presently, Mr. Benbow, who had come up to him with some speech or remark, felt his host's eyes glowing on him, and received a very short answer. He then heard him say—

"Come, Mrs. Effingham, I want you to favour me with your opinion of the new greenhouse."

Again she looked back at Mr. Benbow, as though saying, "This is about you."

The host and Mrs. Effingham were a long time absent. At lunch, when the whole party was assembled, the Duke announced carelessly, "We are fixed on having the dance here the day after to-morrow. I don't see why we should vary from our original intentions."

"Very spirited of you, indeed, Duke," said one of the guests.

"It shall be a family gathering," went on the Duke; "and I have just telegraphed to my daughter and her husband to come at once."

The guilty start that Mr. Benbow gave! Where was his training for years past—all his practice? It must be that accursed Sword which had shattered all his nerves.

"Telegraphed for them!" he repeated almost involuntarily.

"Yes," said Mrs. Sheldon, "the Duke is like the Czar towards his family. He does not ask much from them; but, when he issues a ukase to them, they must obey."

"Yes, I must have Rosa here," he said, much pleased with this happy description of his power, "and they will be here to-morrow. Yes, I shall have my daughter and you will have your son, Mr. Benbow. So we shall both be paternally happy. This

ball is given in honour of Rosa, and it is only fitting that she should be present."

His son and Rosa to meet her there! It was desperate. Something must be done, and done at once. No matter what suspicion, what degradation, they must all be saved from that ruin! How he got through that meal he knew not; but when he next seemed to collect himself, he found himself on the road, hurrying on to the next town—not the railway-station of the place, for that would have excited suspicion. What paces, what fearful strides he took! This Mr. Benbow—lately so powerful—so able to control events, now skulking along like some criminal, as he indeed was. For what was hanging over his head beside that fatal Sword? Punishment, trial, disgrace—certain disgrace and ruin! Ruin for everyone!

When he reached the telegraph office, he wrote out a telegram. How was he to put it—what excuse? How was he to urge, to argue, in those constrained limits? Let him put it ever so earnestly and fiercely, would they mind him? No matter, it must be tried. So he wrote—

"You must not come here. For my sake, for Heaven's sake, stay where you are! There are reasons for it, which I will tell you later. Have confidence in me—trust me. You know me. But it would be ruin!"

He wrote several copies of this message on the forms—now saying too much, and that too strongly; now too little—and tearing them up fiercely and trampling them on the ground. He, at last, satisfied himself; and sent away perhaps the most incoherent and wildest message that had been received at the office for years.

A POSTAL COURTSHIP.

A READING.

BY LITCHFIELD MOSELEY.

"SHE really is the prettiest little creature I ever saw," said Mr. Willoughby Vane, as he turned from the window for the fiftieth time that morning. "Jane," he added, addressing the housemaid, who was clearing away the breakfast things, "have you any idea who the people are who have taken old Mr. Adderley's house opposite?"

"Well, yes, sir, if you please," returned the handmaiden. "I met their cook at the grocer's the other day, and she said that her master's name was Black—Capting

Choker Black—and that he was staying here on leave of absence with his wife and daughter, sir."

"Oh, indeed! Did she happen to mention the young lady's name?"

"Yes, sir. She called her Miss Eva."

"Eva! What a charming name!" murmured Willoughby to himself; and then he added, aloud,

"That will do, Jane, thank you."

Mr. Willoughby Vane was a bachelor, twenty-eight years old, rich, indolent, and tolerably good-looking. He lived with a widowed mother in a pleasant house in the Clapham-road; and, having nothing else to do, had fallen desperately in love with his pretty *vis-à-vis*, and anxiously sought an opportunity for an introduction. However, having discovered the name of his enchantress, he determined to address her anonymously by letter.

Having decided upon taking this step, the next thing to be done was to put it into execution; and, having shut himself in his little study, after many futile attempts, he succeeded in framing an epistle to the lady to his satisfaction; begging her, if she valued his peace of mind, to return an answer to "W. V., The Post-office, Clapham-common." That done, he went out for a walk, and dropped the letter in the nearest box.

Regularly three times a-day, for a week afterwards, he called at the post-office to see whether an answer had arrived for him. As the week advanced, Willoughby began to lose his appetite, and grew so restless and irritable that Mrs. Vane, like a fond mother, fancied that her dear boy was unwell, and begged him to consult their medical attendant. But her son laughed at the idea, knowing well that his complaint was beyond the doctor's skill to cure.

He was beginning to despair of ever receiving a reply, when, to his great delight, on the seventh morning, a letter was handed to him by the postmistress, written in a dainty female hand, and addressed to "W. V." Almost unable to conceal his emotion, he quitted the shop, broke open the seal, and drank in the contents.

They were evidently of a pleasing nature, for he read the letter over again and again, kissed the envelope, put it into his breast coat pocket, and hurried home, to see his innamorata looking out of the window of the opposite house, as usual.

For a moment, his first impulse was to salute her respectfully; but immediately afterwards he bethought himself that, as he was still incognito, the young lady would perhaps feel insulted by the action. Besides, how could she have any idea that he was "W. V."? So he went indoors, and amused himself for three hours in inditing a reply to her letter, which he posted the same afternoon; and, in due course, a second answer arrived.

And so matters went on, a constant interchange of letters being kept up for a fortnight, during which time Mr. Willoughby Vane spent his days in running to and from the post-office, writing letters, and watching his fair neighbour from the window of the dining-room.

"Confound it!" he would sometimes say to himself. "How very provoking the dear girl is! She never will look this way. I do wish I could catch her eye, if only for a moment. What a horridly sour-looking old crab the mother is! Depend upon it, Willoughby, that poor child is anything but happy at home with those two old fogies. Indeed, her letters hint as much." And having given vent to his feelings, he would put on his hat and walk to the post-office; or shut himself in his room, and compose another note to his "Dearest Eva."

At length, three weeks having flown rapidly away in this manner, he received a letter one morning from the young lady, which ran as follows:—

"TO 'W. V.'"

"SIR—As it is useless to continue a correspondence in this manner, I think it is now time for you to throw off your incognito, and reveal your true name and position to one to whom you are not totally indifferent. Believe me that nothing inspires love like mutual confidence. Prove to me that I have not been imprudent in answering your letters by at once informing me who you are. It is with no feeling of idle curiosity I ask this, but simply for our mutual satisfaction.—Yours, &c.,

"EVA."

To which Willoughby replied by return of post:—

"DEAREST EVA—If you will permit me to call you so! Have you not for weeks past observed a young man, with his hair brushed back, anxiously watching you from the window of the opposite house? And

although you have apparently never taken the slightest notice of him, I trust that his features are not altogether repulsive to you. I am that individual.

"Charmed by the graceful magic of thine eye,
Day after day I watch, and dream, and sigh:
Watch thee, dream of thee, sigh for thee alone,
Fair star of Clapham—may I add, mine own?"

To quote, with some alterations, the noble stanza of the poet Brown! And now I have a favour to ask you. Whenever you see me at the window, take no notice of me at present, lest my mother should observe it. In a few days she will be going out of town, and then we can throw off all restraint. Till then, adieu! Adieu, my adorable one, adieu! My eyes are ever on you.—Your own

"WILLOUGHBY VANE."

To which epistle came the following answer:—

"DEAR SIR—Your explanation is perfectly satisfactory. I may also add, that your features are not at all repulsive to—

"EVA."

"Bless her! What a delightful little soul she is!" ejaculated Willoughby.

And he went out, ordered a new suit of clothes, and had his hair cut.

"Willy," said Mrs. Vane to her son the next morning, "I wish you would do something to improve your mind, and not waste your time by looking out of the window all day, as you have lately done. Come and read the Parliamentary debates to me, if you have nothing else to do."

The worthy lady was a red-hot politician, and for three mortal hours she kept him at this delightful task; at the expiration of which time he succeeded in escaping to his own room, where he wrote the following note to Eva:—

"DEAREST EVA—I am overjoyed at the contents of your brief communication. If, as you say, my features are not altogether repulsive to you, may I hope that you will consent to be mine—mine only?

"WILLOUGHBY."

Back came the reply the next morning:—

"DEAR WILLOUGHBY—Your reply has made me feel very happy. It is very dull here—no society except my father and mother. I long for more congenial companionship.—Thine,
"EVA."

In this delightful manner the days flew on—halcyon days, too, they were for Willoughby, and sweetened by the interchange of this and similar lover-like correspondence. On the following Monday morning, Mrs. Vane left town on a visit to some friends in Devonshire, leaving her son to keep house at home. That same afternoon, one of Captain Black's servants brought the following note for Willoughby:—

"WILLIE—Have you any objection to my telling my dear papa all? Matters have now gone so far, that it will be impossible for either of us to retract what we have written. Let us take papa into our confidence. I know his kind and generous nature well, and have no fear that he will oppose our union. Pray send me a line by bearer.

"EVA."

The answer was as follows:—

"MY OWN EVA—Do whatever you consider best. My fate is in your hands. If your papa should refuse his consent, I— But I will not think of anything so dreadful! Fear not that I shall ever retract. Life without you would be a desert, with no oasis to brighten it.—Yours until death,

"WILLOUGHBY."

That evening, just as Willoughby had finished dinner, he heard a loud double-knock at the street door; and, on its being opened, a strange voice inquired, in a loud tone,

"Is Mr. Willoughby Vane at home?"

His heart beat violently as Jane, entering the room, said—

"A gentleman wishes to speak to you in the library, sir."

And she handed him a card, inscribed "Captain Choker Black, C.B., H.M.'s 1794th Foot."

"I will be with him in a moment," said Willoughby; and he swallowed a couple of glasses of sherry, to nerve him for the interview.

"Captain Choker Black, I believe?" he said as he entered the library.

"Your servant, sir," said the gallant captain—who, glass in eye, was busily engaged in scrutinizing an engraving of the Battle of Navarino. "Your servant, sir. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Willoughby Vane?"

Willoughby bowed.

"Then, sir, of course you know the business that has brought me here?"

Terribly nervous, and scarcely knowing what answer to make, our hero bowed again.

"Come, come, sir, don't be afraid to speak out! My daughter has made me her confidant, so let there be no reserve between us. Eva has told me all!"

Here poor Willoughby blushed up to the roots of his hair.

"You see, I know all about it. You have fallen desperately in love with the poor girl; and although you have never exchanged three words together, you are already engaged to be married. Mighty expeditious, upon my word! Ha! ha! ha! Pray excuse me for laughing, but the idea is somewhat comical! Ha! ha! ha!"

As the Captain appeared to be in a very good humour, Willoughby's courage began to rise.

"Don't mention it, sir. You are *her* father, and have a right to do what you please. But I sincerely trust that you have no objections to offer."

"I? None! Believe me, I shall be delighted to see my Eva comfortably settled. But harkye, sir. Business is business. I am a plain, blunt man, and fifteen years' sojourn with one's regiment in India doesn't help to polish one. First of all, what are your prospects?"

And the Captain drew a note-book from his pocket, and proceeded to examine our hero, as if he were in a court of justice.

"You are an only son, I believe."

"I am."

"Good." And down went the note in the pocket book.

"Your age?"

"Twenty-eight next birthday."

"Twenty-eight! Good. Is your constitution healthy?"

"I believe so. I have had the measles, whooping cough, and mumps."

"Disorders peculiar to infancy. Good." And the Captain scribbled away again.

"Are you engaged in any business or profession?"

"None."

"Then how on earth do you live?"

"On my private income, Captain."

"Then all I can say is, you're an uncommonly lucky fellow to be able to subsist on that. I only wish I could. What is your income?"

"About seven hundred a-year."

"Is it in house property, shares in limited companies, or the Funds? If in public companies, I should be sorry to give two years' purchase for the lot."

"In the New Three per Cents."

"Good. I think I may say, *very good*! What sort of temper are you?"

"Well, that's *rather* a difficult question to answer," said Willoughby, smiling for the first time.

"Hang it, sir, not at all!" returned the Captain. "If anyone asked me my temper, I should say 'Hasty!' sir—confoundedly hasty! And Choker Black's proud of it, sir—proud of it!"

"Say about the average," answered Willoughby, timidly.

"Temper average," said the Captain, jotting it down. "I think those are about all the questions I have to ask you. You know my daughter by sight?"

"I have had the pleasure of seeing her frequently—from the window, sir!"

"And you think you could be happy with her?"

"Think, Captain! I am *certain* of it."

"Very good. Now, harkye, Mr. Willoughby Vane. Marry her, treat her well, and be happy. Neglect her, blight her young affections by harshness or cruelty, and hang me, sir, if I don't riddle you with bullets! Gad, sir, I'm a man of my word, and I'll do what I say, as sure as my name's Choker Black!"

"I have no fear on that score, Captain. Unite her to me, and if a life of devotion—"

"I know all about that," said the Captain. "Keep your fine phrases for the girl's ears. Give me your hand, sir. I've taken a fancy to you!"

"You flatter me, Captain!"

"Hang it, sir, no! Choker Black never indulges in flattery. Don't be afraid to grasp my hand, sir; it's yours so long as I find you plain sailing and straightforward. But if ever I suspect you of any artifice or deception, I'll knock you down with it. So now I hope we perfectly understand each other."

"One word more," said Willoughby. "Am I to understand that you consent to our union?"

"Certainly. You can be married to-morrow, if you please. Sir, the happiness of my dear child is my first consideration.

Gad, sir, I am not a brute—not one of those unnatural parents people read of in novels. Choker Black may be a fire-eater in the field; but, at any rate, he knows how to treat his own flesh and blood."

"Captain, you overwhelm me with gratitude."

"Say no more about it. Clap on your hat and come across the road with me, and I'll introduce you to my daughter at once."

Scarcely knowing what he was about, Willoughby did as he was told. They crossed the road together, and the Captain opened his door with a latch-key.

"One moment, if you please," said Willoughby, who was titivating his hair and arranging his cravat.

"Are you ready now?" asked the Captain.

"Quite."

"Mr. Willoughby Vane," cried the Captain, ushering our hero into the drawing-room. Then, waving his hand, he added, "Allow me to introduce you to my wife and daughter."

Willoughby looked exceedingly foolish as he bowed to the two ladies. On a couch by the fireside sat his enchantress, looking more bewitchingly radiant than ever; her *vis-à-vis* being the tall, thin, angular woman in black that he had frequently noticed from over the way.

"What a contrast," thought Willoughby, "between mother and daughter!"

"Annie, my dear, Mr. Willoughby Vane is nervous, no doubt. You know the adage. Let us leave the young people together, and he'll soon find his tongue then, I'll wager," said the Captain, addressing the *younger* of the two ladies, who immediately rose from her seat.

"Stay, sir—there is some mistake here!" said Willoughby. "This lady is—" and he pointed to the gaunt female.

"My daughter, sir!" said the Captain. "My daughter by my first wife."

"And this—" ejaculated our hero, turning to the young lady.

"Is MY SECOND WIFE, sir!"

Mr. Willoughby Vane fled from his home that night. About a month later, his almost broken-hearted mother received a letter from him, explaining the whole affair; and the post-mark bore the words "Montreal, Canada."

THE MORTIMERS :

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK IV.—CHAPTER IV.

ON MALTON DOWNS.

IT was on the evening before the first day of the Malton meeting that the company arrived at Madingley Chase, and at Malton Park, the seat of his Grace the Duke of Fairholme. Sir Harold's racing friends were a sober and staid set—of the "old school," as it is termed, with a certain amount of implied contempt, by the bold and speculative spirits of the Young England party—old friends and club-fellows—army men and navy men, and men of no profession, business, or calling in life, save that of making themselves perfectly comfortable under all circumstances. Fogies, in coats and continuations of antiquated cut, made by tailors whose names the generation of new men know not, or sneer at if they do; elderly gentlemen in buffish drab waistcoats, and black and white checked neckerchiefs of gingham, well starched, or dark blue silk or satin with the well-known birds-eye spots of white in them. The men you see always, year after year, unchanged—no older, no goutier—in the paddock at Epsom, on the lawn at Ascot and Goodwood, in the stewards' stand at Doncaster, and no less regularly with Sir Harold Mortimer's party at Malton. As a species, they may be described as old members of old and particularly exclusive and respectable clubs, where they eat very good dinners and drink very good wines, and where they play a very steady and respectable rubber of whist in the evenings. They are, in town, dining and giving dinners, at which '32 port is a great feature, for a couple of months in the season. Then they are scattered about at country houses, and nothing but a race meeting collects these specimens of the almost extinct "fine old English gentleman" again. Of such men—nigh a dozen of them—was Sir Harold's party made up; leavened, however, by the presence of Mr. Robert Mortimer and a political friend or two, Mrs. Mortimer, Mr. Campbell, and some few others of like character.

The evening before the Malton meeting was spent at the Chase in the work of despatching a very heavy dinner at half-past

seven, which was not really over until nearly eleven, when the guests of the Baronet sat down to whist, or scandal, as they felt disposed: shrewd and wary old stagers playing guinea points, and betting their "five to four on the odd," just to add a little interest to the game and put a sovereign or two in their pockets. And their proceedings during their stay at the Chase were the same evening after evening, and had been so with most of them any time these twenty years, as the Malton meeting came round, and an invitation from their old friend came with it, to remind them of it, as a matter of course. And Miss Margaret, prim and neat in her dress, and kindly as of old, received such of them as chose to visit her in her drawing-room with the stately yet benignant manner of an ancient flame. Some of these very old gentlemen had, in days long gone by, regarded their friend's sister as rather an eligible partner for life—if she could be made to look at the matter in the same light. Indeed, old General Browne, the Nestor of the turf, father of the last and grandfather of this present generation of the followers of our noble national sport, had, as was well known to more than one of his portly intimates, offered to Miss Margaret Mortimer his honours, his hand, and his half-pay. But all these attractions did not serve to win the heart of the kind lady of five and forty summers to whom they were presented. Miss Margaret Mortimer did not think proper to change her own name for that of the General; and the warrior retired discomfited—for the first time in his life almost—stayed away from the Chase for one whole year, and then paid his visits twice a-year to Madingley as usual, and as if nothing had happened to wound his sensitive and ripe affections—which probably was, after all, the wisest course he could pursue. With Mr. Campbell and his brother talking of politics and other affairs of the great world, and such of Sir Harold's old friends as preferred tea and a chat with Mabel and Mrs. Mortimer and herself to the seductive charms of the whist tables, Miss Margaret spent her evenings and did the honours of the Baronet's house with her wonted stately grace and genial welcome for all her guests. The presence of his friends cheered Sir Harold to something like his old liveliness, and freed him from the depressing influence of his sad affliction for the time; and altogether did

him more good than the united wisdom of half a dozen of the best doctors to be found in London could have effected in as many professional visits to the Chase.

At Malton Park, at the invitation of his Grace the Duke of Fairholme, a very different party was collected; though the individuals who composed it had the same object in view—attending and assisting at the coming meeting. Preparations had been made on a princely scale for a week of feasting. The *cuisine* was as nearly as possible perfection. All the arrangements were liberal to extravagance; and there was, pervading the whole proceedings, an air of bachelor-like freedom which charmed Fairholme's guests, and made them compare Malton Park very favourably with other establishments where they stayed at which a lady ruled supreme. Fairholme was delighted to receive his friends in his own house for the first time—to rally round him the Young England party—to be the fast leader of a fast set. He had Charles Mortimer and a number of young men of his own age among his guests, their ranks being filled up by the captains and colonels and others, his acquaintances of the turf. Lords Epsom and Essendene, Colonel Hardinge and Captain Shairp were there, with the usual followers of the national sport—men with whose names we are so familiar, whose movements as they travel from place to place are recorded in the *Morning Post* as being “among the fashionable company present,” or “the visitors at the Castle include”—and then we are favoured with a long list of their noble names.

Reginald Erle had been honoured with his Grace's invitation to spend a night at Malton Park, and had accepted it—Fairholme, with his usual generous impetuosity, declaring he could have no excuses; and Sir Harold urged Erle to go.

“It must be dull for you at the Chase,” he said; “go and stay with his Grace a couple of days, and then, when some of my old friends are gone, you will have Mr. Campbell all to yourself.”

“Oh, I'll ask Campbell to come too,” said Fairholme.

“I don't think Margaret will spare him,” the Baronet replied. “We shall want him to help us in amusing Robert.”

So Erle was driven over to Malton Park, and found the house of his noble host full

of company. Dinner was served at half-past eight in one of the newly decorated saloons, and was altogether a very splendid affair.

Erle was seated by the side of Charles Mortimer.

“This is Liberty Hall, indeed,” he remarked to Reginald, as a servant filled his glass with sparkling wine. “It is just the sort of place I like to come to. I hate stiffness and formality. By Jove! Erle, Fairholme is quite a prince.”

“And he lives in a most princely style, apparently,” said Erle, glancing at the splendour around them. But he was in no way disposed for sprightly dinner-table talk, and he returned for the most part monosyllabic replies to Charles's remarks. He had accepted the gracious invitation of Fairholme for three reasons. He could not find any very good excuse for refusing to go; Sir Harold seemed to desire that he should; and he wished to see something of Charles Mortimer, in whom, since he had talked of Bertie with Mr. Horatio Grobey, he felt a stronger interest than before.

“We have hardly met one another, I think, since you came to live at the Chase,” said Charles to Erle. “I hope you have never had any reason to regret your acquiescence in my request. I knew you were the very man for Sir Harold.”

“I have every reason to be glad that I accepted your offer,” said Erle. “I can hardly find words to express my appreciation of the very great kindness and consideration I have received from the various members of Sir Harold Mortimer's household, from the very first day I entered it.”

Erle made not the slightest allusion to Mrs. Grafton or her niece, nor did he hint that his relations with her had been other than of the most passing kind. A lodger for a few weeks in a London house will rarely be disposed to inquire kindly after his landlady, so he thought it prudent to say nothing; but he carefully watched the expression of Charles's face in his unguarded moments, and the conclusion he arrived at was that the young gentleman suspected he knew all that had taken place.

With all his father's power of dissembling, and assuming a careless and unconcerned manner when any purpose could be served by such assumption, Charles Mortimer was manifestly somewhat uneasy in Erle's company.

And Reginald resolved to say nothing to Charles concerning the subjects then uppermost in his mind, but to behave himself with as much of ease and composure as the disturbed state of his mind permitted. He longed to open his thoughts to Campbell, and take the shrewd advice of his friend. But for the inconvenience it would cause Sir Harold, and his great regard for the old Baronet, he would have left the Chase at a moment's notice, and hurried off to Paris to consult Dr. Gasc, and Lavelle, who was with Madam and the Doctor there. And irrespective of his own doubts and fears for himself, he was at a loss to know how to act with regard to Mabel Despencer. Which was the kindest course? Which the right one for him to pursue? Should he lay all he knew before Sir Harold; or should he wait the course of events, and act in accordance with the current they might ultimately take?

These were the questions he was putting to himself, in the time that elapsed between his evening walk with Mr. Horatio Grobey and his visit to Malton Park. These were the doubts and misgivings that still agitated his mind during dinner—nor left him when a general move was made by the other guests. Except that their host was generous and thoroughly unselfish, and careless what he did himself so that others were agreeably entertained, Erle could not help remarking that every other person in the company seemed to have a selfish end in view. Mr. Jack Childers and Captain Shairp led a party off to the billiard-room, to try their luck with those two adepts at pool. Others sat down, in little parties, to different games at cards; and it was patent to the most casual observer that gain and not amusement was the object to be attained. Erle excused himself from joining any of the tables, on the ground that he did not understand the games they played, and could not afford to lose if he did. Nobody saw in him a pigeon to be plucked; so this aristocratic company very readily permitted him to amuse himself as he liked. He lighted his cigar, and stepped out of the window on to the lawn. It was July, the air was close and sultry; there had been no rain for several weeks, and now the sky was clouded over, and the welcome rain seemed likely to come at last. Erle walked about for half an hour, thoughtfully smoking his cigar and occasionally standing for a moment at the open window

and looking into the room, as the sound of voices issuing from it attracted his attention. Presently heavy drops began to fall, accompanied by vivid flashes of summer lightning. He threw away the end of his cigar, and entered the brilliantly lighted saloon again. *Ecarté* and *piquet*, at one or two tables whist, and on the large centre table hazard, were being played.

Fairholme sat opposite Erle as he entered. By his side was his glass of iced soda and brandy; behind him stood a servant ready to give him a light for each fresh cigarette of a never-ending series. Lords Essendene and Epsom, Colonel Hardinge, Charles Mortimer, and several others of the company were seated at this principal table; and presently their number was augmented by the arrival of Mr. Jack Childers and the Captain from the billiard-room. To the ears of a gambler no sound will prove so penetrating as the rattle of the bones. Hazard is a livelier game than pool, and the billiard players soon threw down their cues to take their turn at the dice. They had sat down to "a gamble."

"We'll make a night of this, I vote," said Mr. Childers.

Fairholme's friendship had filled Jack's pocket-case with notes.

So they played on, amid the rattle of the "ivories," the clink of glasses, the calls of the "groom porter," the rich sound of gold, and rustling and crumpling of notes; and, without, the distant roar of thunder.

Fairholme was in luck.

"Seven's the main—seven!" was called, as each in his turn took the box and chose that number; or, with intended shrewdness, took another, and "Five's the main!" or other numbers varying with the player's option, were called. And Fairholme was in the most splendid luck, and "threw in" with an amazing persistency of fortune.

Charles Mortimer had soon lost his last bank-note. He was sitting next the Duke, and borrowed freely from his pile of notes.

Time wore on, and the other players left off their games and gathered round the hazard table.

Fairholme was cool and undisturbed as ever. He took good and ill-luck alike. Childers and the Colonel, too, were winners. The chief loser was Charles, and he could not take his losses calmly. He became hot and flushed as he increased his stakes, with a view of recouping his losing turns.



Once a Week.]

“ON MALTON DOWNS.” (PUZZ.) “THE NORTHMERS.”—Page 455.

[June 25, 1870.

"Your luck is marvellous," he said to Fairholme, as his friend added a new roll of notes to his pile.

So they played on, heedless of anything but their pursuit, till, with the first streaks of dawn, the storm ceased, and daylight gave to the light of the wax candles a sickly glare.

"Pull down the blinds," said Fairholme, to the servant behind his chair.

So the daylight was kept out for a time.

At last, when nobody would play any longer, Charles reluctantly left the table with the rest, to snatch from the morning three or four hours of fevered sleep.

"I'll win it all back to-morrow," he said to himself. "Fairholme can wait for his money, and no man in the world can stand against such luck as mine."

At twelve o'clock they met again, without much appetite for the substantial breakfast their host's cooks had prepared for them. Soda-water and Seltzer, mixed with brandy or hock, according to the more or less simple tastes of the thirsty souls who called for them, were much more generally in demand than tea and coffee. Presently, when breakfast had been hurried through, they started off for the course.

The party from Madingley Chase had arrived before them. There was the usual crowd, extending far down the ropes on each side of the running-ground—the customary roar and din in the ring when the numbers for the first race were hoisted on the telegraph board. Fairholme's horses started in every race of the five or six events set down for decision on the card of the day; and, as usual, they were made favourites. As he sat on his drag, quietly smoking his cigarette, or took his position in the balcony of the stewards' stand, the ring men clustered round him like a flock of hawks. With upturned faces and eager eyes they regarded the pale, slim youth, so carefully dressed, in his suit of light Tweed, with his spray of yellow rosebuds in his button-hole, and hat jauntily set on one side; with Oxford shoes, so bright with varnish, and socks and scarf of his "light and dark blue hoops." The ring men had marked him for their own.

"What do you want to do, your Grace?" cried the polite Mr. Smith.

"I'll bet yer agen anything," roared Mr. Flint, the North-country Leviathan, with his

stentorian voice and broad accent. "What'll yer back, yer Grace?" and he waved his hand in the direction of Fairholme, while his clerk stood at his elbow to book his bets. "Here, yours don't win for a thou."

"How much against mine?" asked his Grace of another of the hungry flock.

"I can't lay more than even money, your Grace," replied the bookmaker.

Fairholme smiled, and shook his head.

"Not good enough."

"'Ere, a monkey to four 'oonderd, if I'm broke over it," cried Mr. Flint. Turning to his clerk, "Put it down, his Grace'll tak it."

But his Grace declined to accept the liberal odds offered by the Leviathan. They gave him a minute's rest: the horses were cantering up past the stand—they went to the rails to look at them.

"Mine'll win," whispered a little and unmistakably Jewish man in the Leviathan's large ear.

"Eh?" he said.

"Mine'll win, I say. I'll stand in with you."

"Thirteen runners," said Mr. Flint. "Shall we offer him six to four?"

"Go on," was the reply.

The fair odds were about four to one; but when his Grace's horses were in the case, the ring men knew his confidence too well to offer him a fair price.

"'Ere six 'oonderd to four, agen that theer Drummer Boy, yer Grace—coom," said the Yorkshireman.

Fairholme nodded, and took out his pencil. Before he put his book in his pocket again he had backed his colt for a couple of thousand pounds. He beckoned Butler, his trainer, to him.

"Shall we do it, John?" he asked.

"I think we shall, your Grace; but I wouldn't put the money down too hard. We may be done."

There were a few moments of anxious waiting—all eyes were strained to catch a glimpse of the horses at the post. Then they were off on their half-mile spin. The bell rang, and almost before it had ceased to swing the horses were at the stand. The Duke's colt led the way by half a length, and looked like winning easily. There was, however, a horse, ridden in a black jacket, with a tarnished gold belt across it, creeping up, almost unobserved, on the side of the course farthest from the stand. In a few

strides he was abreast with the Duke's champion. The blue hoops were in danger of defeat. The two horses raced head and head for a few strides.

"The favourite's beat! The favourite's beat!" the ring men roared and shouted, in great delight.

"Won by a short head," was the judge's fiat when John Butler put the question. So the Drummer Boy was a good second.

"I hope your Grace hadn't much on," said the trainer to his patron, as they stood together in the paddock by the side of the panting animal.

"A stiffish bit, John," said Fairholme, with the smile with which he always lost his money.

"I thought we might be done," said the trainer; "it was no certainty."

"We couldn't have been much nearer," said Fairholme; "though I would rather be last than second, a great deal. I hate to be done by a head."

"A short head, too, your Grace. You might have thrown a blanket over the first four."

"Better luck next time. Did you back mine, Charlie?" he inquired of Charles Mortimer, who had joined him.

"I had a little on," said Charles, who had followed the Duke's lead. "I wish you would put me on to a good thing."

"We shall win the Cup with Dinner-bell, shan't we, Butler?" said Fairholme to his trainer.

"I think we're sure to win in a canter, your Grace."

"Back him before the numbers go up, Charlie—you may take even money if you can get it."

"Even money?"

"Yes, we shall have to lay odds after the numbers go up. Butler says there will not be above two starters."

Charles Mortimer hurried off to act on Fairholme's advice, having first thanked him for his tip.

"I'll put it down on Dinner-bell, and win something or lose something," he said to himself, as he entered the enclosure again.

"That boy of Robert Mortimer's seems to be going a raker for Dinner-bell," said one of the older of Fairholme's guests to Lord Epsom. "Are you going to back him?"

"I shall wait till I see what goes. Mr.

Charles Mortimer has burnt his fingers a good many times lately, I am told."

"A Duke can't always win," sagely observed the other.

THE EDUCATION OF THE FUTURE.

WE hear a great deal about the higher education of women: I do wish that some influential people would agitate for the lower education of men. Lower, in the sense of relaxing the endeavours to refine the minds of boys beyond a certain point, and paying more attention to their training in those arts which will enable them to support their bodies. Pray do not suspect me of depreciating the classics. I am quite ready to believe that the study of two dead languages for twelve or fourteen years without acquiring the rudiments of either is a capital mental training for the ordinary youth; and I am certain, that in those exceptional cases where boys actually do master the difficulties, and learn to appreciate the wisdom and poetry, of the old sages and bards, no more ennobling studies could have been set before them. But all that we will leave to the schoolmasters, who ought to know better than outsiders how to fulfil the duties which are entrusted to them. I confess total ignorance, then, of matters of detail; and ask men of common sense and no technical knowledge whether we shall not be soon driven into educational revolution. That is the word—*revolution*: the matter is beyond reform. Attempts—very well in their way—have been made of late years to encourage manly sports, and promote hardihood and vigour: mere gusts, showing the direction in which the storm will blow.

The state of the case is simply this: under the present system of training, the children of the upper and upper-middle classes in this country are only fitted to earn their livelihood by law, physic, the Church, the army and navy, or as clerks in public offices. All these professions are overcrowded; and, while the number of candidates increases yearly, there is every prospect of the berths for them diminishing. The army may not be reduced, even though the peace of Europe should remain undisturbed; but it is very unlikely to be increased, and the Government clerks of the future will be in about the same proportion

to the work to be done as those of any mercantile office in the City.

And the number of young men to be provided for within these narrow limits of occupation is not only growing with the natural increase of their class, but is swelled by the addition of multitudes of the children springing from other strata of modern society. The successful tradesman is laudably anxious to give his sons the best education he can hear of; and instead of laying by certain sums to start them in business, when they come to man's estate, in some line similar to his own, and bringing them up accordingly, his great ambition is to send them to schools and colleges where they will imbibe the notion that to be connected with trade is a disgrace. It sounds like an incredibly exaggerated sarcasm to say that any man feels it to be an object of ambition to teach his children to be ashamed of him; but that it is the simple fact of hundreds of Englishmen of the present day, few observers of our social anomalies, I fancy, will doubt. Of course, if a man has made a large fortune, it is his duty to have those who will inherit it properly fitted to take the position which wealth confers; or the father of a son who shows decided talent cannot be too highly praised if he strains every nerve to give him the opportunity of fitly employing his natural gifts. I am speaking of the well-to-do shopkeeper, who earns a comfortable income, but has no real property beyond the balance at his banker's, who prefers to make his boys needy curates, struggling barristers, or discontented clerks, rather than comfortable tradesmen.

One cannot blame the feeling which actuates him, for it is that instinct for getting on without which neither a nation nor an individual can be fit for much, only it happens to have become directed into a morbid channel; and what class of individuals can throw stones at another class on the score of snobbishness? I merely wish to point out how an already over-crowded market is daily becoming more and more glutted.

No doubt there are many advantages to all parties in boys and young men, whose future paths will diverge very widely, being educated together up to the age of twenty-two; but when the population is quadrupled, without anything like a corresponding demand for increased professional labour, either these advantages must be foregone, and distinct systems of training adopted for

boys who are exceptionally clever or whose fortunes are assured, and for those of average ability who will have to earn their bread in branches of industry which are now absurdly looked down upon, or else the whole plan of education must be altered for all. For, in addition to those who at present manage to pick up a living by the professions, we must take into consideration all those who, after a few feeble, half-hearted efforts, subside into a loafing existence upon the interest of small capitals, which will be totally inadequate for their necessities when the price of everything is seriously increased and the value of money diminished: events, the former of which is certain, and the latter probable—especially in a country with a gold standard.

Not that there is any necessity for looking so far ahead, and considering the necessities of the next century, except to show that the question is not a passing one; for the difficulty is enormous even now—as many a bewildered father can testify. Hundreds of English gentlemen, if they were to utter the constant thought which is turning their hair gray, would say, "What am I to do with my boys? They are good, honest, sensible lads; but they like out-door, active life, and hate learning. I cannot afford to send them into the army; I have no interest to get them appointments in India; they are neither clever nor studious enough to gain the prizes in competitive examinations. The life of a civil engineer or of an architect, indeed, would suit any one of them; but, as I cannot detect any signs of talent, or even taste for drawing or mechanical contrivance, I am afraid of throwing away the premium. I can see no chance of their succeeding as lawyers or doctors in the present state of competition; and as for the Church, I suppose one of them must try that—and I hope he will alter very much after he is ordained. I may have sufficient interest to get another a clerkship in some City counting-house or insurance office. Eighty pounds the first year, and a rise of five pounds a-year till the salary reaches two hundred and fifty: not a brilliant income, but better than starving. Poor lad—how he will hate it! And whatever is to be done with the others, I can't think!"

Well, the difficulty might be partially solved this way: As tradesmen are continually sending their sons into the professions,

professional men will have to send *their* sons into trade. You may look as horrified and shocked as you please, madam, it is what we are bound to come to—and a great advantage to the community it will very probably be; for, surely, it is quite on the cards that a good deal of the chicanery, adulteration, false weights, &c., that we hear so much of, may be owing to the little esteem in which retail traders are held amongst the landed, professional, and even the mercantile classes. And this prejudice has extended immensely, mark you, in the last century or so. It is not so long since the poorer members of the clerical and medical professions met the grocer and linendraper on equal terms: that is a consideration for those who do not like to put a foot down without a precedent. A more significant fact to my mind, however, is the ardour which noblemen and gentlemen who are not very well off show in trading whenever they can do it without losing caste. How eagerly many of them become directors of hotel companies, wine companies, cigar companies; and some, who are either unable to get on the management of such concerns, or shrink from the responsibility of being actual members of a board, are not above acting as commission agents. Now, surely, the difference between the director of a wine company and a wine merchant is very subtle; and the man who bores his friends, his club, or his regiment to get goods from some association which pays him a percentage on all business so brought to them, has little right to despise the commercial traveller who goes about with samples. It is true that the former does his little business by stealth, and would blush to find it fame; but it is difficult to imagine why *that* should make it more gentlemanly.

I believe that the taste for dabbling in commerce will increase, and that men of good families will be found, ere long, to set the example of casting aside all shams and pretences, and going boldly into trade under their own names. Some of us now living may yet see such a title as "Fitz-Blueblood and Howlinswell, Tobacconists," over a shop in Regent-street. But, if the partners have been brought up at Eton and Oxford, there will be a sad chance of those noble names being soon transferred to the *Gazette*.

But perhaps you think I am trifling with my subject. You may say that the trading

community will always keep the bulk of commercial business in the hands of their families; that only a few interlopers from other classes of society could manage to become absorbed in their ranks. Or that, if it were otherwise, the evil would not be remedied, as there is only room for a certain number of shopkeepers in the country; and if the sons of tradesmen are to be supplanted, the question remains, What are *they* to do? Your objection is perfectly sound: the only really wide prospect for the penniless families of the upper classes in England will be emigration. I am speaking, of course, of the dullards and the study-haters—the clever and persevering will make their way in their own country as heretofore; but only a comparatively small proportion of scapegraces could be provided for by the opening of the occupations now considered unfit for gentlemen. The great majority will have to seek employment in Australia, New Zealand, British Columbia, or California. And this brings me to the marrow of my subject; for, if they have received no education beyond that at present afforded by our public schools and universities, they may just as well jump into the sea half-way. The tendency of our present system of training is to produce scholars, or loafers: it is the latter who would have to emigrate, and loafing is just the one thing which a new country will not stand. Any description of honest industry is respected; no work, however humble, will prove a bar to a man's future advancement; but the loafer is universally despised. Now, this is a state of things which ought not to repel the British youth, who is not born idle or listless, but is artificially trained to become so. His whole educational course is too often one continual endeavour to thwart his natural bent, and force him towards detested studies, in which he can never make any useful progress.

Now, if it once becomes a recognized plan that emigration shall be the natural resource of those boys of the upper classes who will have to earn their living, and show no signs of being able to do so in any of those professions which demand much book learning, parents will require the schools to combine instruction in various handicrafts with the more elegant and intellectual studies; so that no lad, whether he becomes a fair classic and mathematician or not, shall be at a loss how to win his daily

bread if he finds himself set down in a new country, where two willing hands are of more service to a man than all the learning of a German philosopher. Surely, there need be no difficulty in finding out the best thing to teach any particular boy: a little observation would show discerning parents or tutors that one lad had a turn for chemistry, another for engineering or mechanical contrivance; and, where they failed to discover anything beyond a vague taste for out-of-door employment, it should be a general rule to teach him farming, and that in as practical a way as possible. Let him learn to plough, fold sheep, &c., with his own hands, and then the lectures on scientific agriculture will be more interesting to him; and he will be ready, if necessary, to become a useful member of any colony—English, French, or American.

Under some such system of education as this, landowners at home would likewise learn many useful hints concerning the management and improvement of their estates. Nor would the time spent by clever boys in acquiring mechanical arts be by any means wasted; for think of the improvements and discoveries which might fairly be anticipated from such union of theory and practice!

THE YOUNG SOLDIER.

"Jeune soldat, où vas-tu ?"
 "Je vais combattre pour Dieu et les autels de la patrie;
 pour la justice; pour la sainte cause des peuples; pour les
 droits sacrés du genre humain."

"Que tes armes soient bénies, jeune soldat!"

LAMENNAIS.

"YOUNG soldier, whither goest thou?"
 "Wherever sorrow goes, I go.
 Sorrow I count my deadly foe.
 I walk 'mid miserable men,
 Prostrate within dark Falsehood's den,
 Proclaiming truth and right.
 Snake-like, each tyrant hides his head;
 Behold! the oppressed ones all are fled.
 A light breaks o'er the sullen land,
 As Joy and Peace come hand in hand,
 And Right o'ercometh Might."

"Blessed be thy arms, young soldier!"

"Young soldier, whither goest thou?"

"To search out men of wicked ways,
 Enmeshed in error's foulest maze;
 To break the prisoner's bar and chain;
 Freedom give to the slaves again,
 Who groan beneath the sky.
 Behold, grim kings on dusky thrones,
 Unheeding hear their piteous moans.
 'Onward!' I shout—'for liberty!'
 We triumph, and the land is free—
 God hears his people's cry."

"Blessed be thy arms, young soldier!"

"Young soldier, whither goest thou?"

"I go to fight, that none may scorn
 The day on which his son was born;
 That brother may not grieve to see
 His sister fading silently,
 Like early flowers in spring;
 That none a savage warfare rage
 Against the poor man's heritage;
 That little children may not cry,
 'O give us bread, or else we die!'
 Lord, shield them 'neath thy wing!"

"Blessed be thy arms, young soldier!"

"Young soldier, whither goest thou?"

"With spear in hand, I gladly go;
 All social barriers overthrow;
 Preparing for the God-like plan—
 Confederated man and man,
 A brotherhood of love;—
 Peace, justice, and the people's cause,
 Based upon God's eternal laws;
 Born in a new and finer birth—
 One God in heaven, one home on earth—
 A happy home on earth to prove
 The goodness of our God above."

"God bless thee, soldier, seven times seven,
 And give thy soul a place in heaven!"

TABLE TALK.

THE DEATH LAST WEEK of Mr. Charles Dickens leaves a blank that will not readily be filled up. The great humourist has died a comparatively young man, in harness, with a new work of fiction only a quarter published. That he was a man of the most original genius, is undisputed; many of his fanciful creations are unrivalled in literature. Such characters as Mr. Pickwick, the two Wellers, and Mrs. Gamp, alone would perpetuate the name of their distinguished author. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Charles Dickens. What is mortal of him lies buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey: the only tribute of admiration and love we can now pay is to his memory. Let the people of England, for whom he wrote—with whom he gained a popularity such as rarely has been bestowed upon any man in his lifetime—imitate his earnest working life; lay to heart the lessons his writings teach, and keep his memory green.

LIKE THACKERAY'S, Dickens's death was sudden; like Thackeray, he died with an unfinished work on his hands. The author of the "Mystery of Edwin Drood" has

now penetrated that great mystery which is before us all. It is understood his last story is but a fragment, though the book is considerably advanced; and it is unlikely that it could be finished satisfactorily by another hand. It had the faults peculiar to Dickens's writings, but it gave promise of becoming every month more interesting as the plot was developed, and of being worthy in every way of its author. Sad as are the circumstances which now surround it, the production of such a book as the "Mystery of Edwin Drood" proves that the mind of Charles Dickens was still fresh, fertile, and vigorous as of old; and that he was called away from the scene of his labours in the maturity of his intellectual and imaginative powers.

ANYTHING RELATING TO THE kindly sympathy and goodness of heart, which were as characteristic of Charles Dickens as a man, as they were of the best characters in his fictions, will be read just now with interest by all. Referring to a note of ours in "Table Talk" (No. 118) as to the place where Charles Dickens first read in public, a correspondent says:—"I happened to be resident in Bradford, Yorkshire, in the year 1854, and was officially connected with a large working men's educational institute, with but small funds at command, except the contributions from those receiving education from it; and it occurred to me that if the committee could only secure the services of Mr. Dickens, in the shape of a public reading, ample funds would be available for its efficient working. Accordingly I suggested my idea to the committee, who thought it was out of the question, and perfectly useless to ask Mr. Dickens to do so. At length, however, I prevailed on the committee to ask him, and to offer him the sum of one hundred pounds if he would give two readings. No reply was received for several weeks; but, on the 1st February, 1854, I received a note from Mr. W. H. Wills to the following effect:—

"Mr. Charles Dickens begs to say that he has not yet been able to reconcile it to his feelings to do what you require for money; but that, if you like to wait until next Christmas-time, he will be very glad to do it for nothing."

The committee were overjoyed at this unexpected communication, and were glad to linger on for a period of eleven months, in expectation of so joyful a consummation.

Mr. Dickens, faithful to his promise, gave a reading of his "Christmas Carol" on the 28th December, 1854, in St. George's Hall, Bradford, capable of holding four thousand persons, to a crowded audience—the then mayor, Mr. Murgatroyd, presiding; and, although the expenses were very heavy, the committee realised a sum of fifty-four pounds for the funds of the institute. And there is one other praiseworthy feature in connection with the reading: Mr. Dickens would not take a sixpence towards his expenses, but paid his own and Mr. Wills's expenses of travelling, and the bill at the George Hotel, where he preferred to stay." We have given this account of what probably was Dickens's first public reading, in the words of our correspondent. It is not only possible, but probable, that the novelist's success as a reader of his own writings at Bradford, led to his afterwards giving those admirable public readings which did so much to enhance his popularity by bringing him in his own person before his thousand admirers.

THERE IS TO BE, as all the world are aware, a Maritime International Exhibition at Naples, in the present year; and the Neapolitans seem to be quite alive to the importance of the occasion. Professor Novi has issued a prospectus of a newspaper, which is to contain articles detailing at length all the various objects exhibited. The professor's manifesto is curious, from the fact that it contains some fine specimens of a style of "tall talking" happily dead among English journalists. He says—

"The prolific seed of civilization now blossoms everywhere; from the frozen shores of the Samoyd to the sands of the desert, from the birthplace of the Tamerlanes to the mud of the steppes, from the rich pampas to the barren sides of the volcano."

There are parts of the professor's own country where some of this seed might be sown to great advantage. Further on, we learn some of the motives which have moved the authorities to institute this maritime exhibition:—

"To amplify the foundations of progress, to disclose to industry a more prosperous future, to awaken emulation, to open to genius and honest activity the way to honours and wealth, to unite the capacities of all countries, and bind as in one single family the supporters of civilization and universal welfare, is the high aim towards which must tend the philanthropist and the legislator. Honour to the nations that enlist as the vanguard of this irresistible movement, and direct the unlimited work of regeneration!"

We may, however, respectfully suggest that this "unlimited work of regeneration" may be reasonably expected to begin at home. There is, as recent travellers there can testify, no part of the world in which it is more needed than Southern Italy—except Greece. We feel sure our readers will think that a few of Professor Novi's grandiloquent phrases are worthy at least of preservation; we will, therefore, reprint his welcome to possible exhibitors:—

"Let us then confidently set ourselves to work for the accomplishment of this gigantic edifice, let us honour the stirring work of the true benefactors of mankind, let us gaze intently on that divine light which blazes upon society, let us hold out our hands to the new-comers, and let them be welcome as they bring us the glittering spark of genius and creation."

Naples is admirably situated for the purpose, as access to it is very easy from the several countries likely to send contributions, and anything that will stimulate the energy and industry of the Southern Italians is deserving of the heartiest encouragement.

THE COMMON OCCURRENCE of what are something more than suggestively Jewish surnames among the people of Wales, may be accounted for thus:—It was at one time the custom among the Welsh for the son to assume the christian name of his father as his own surname. The son of Levi Williams took Levi for his surname, sinking the paternal Williams. In like manner arose such names as Solomon, Davids, and in a few instances even Moses, as the cognomens of undeniably Welsh families. Afterwards, this practice of assuming the father's christian name as a surname fell completely into desuetude; but it had lasted long enough to leave a very enduring mark upon Welsh family names.

"9, Flag-court, Outer Temple,
June 21st, 18—.

"DEAR MR. EDITOR—I am an old member of this ancient and honourable society, and have long dwelt in a certain set of chambers therein. They are commodious and pleasant rooms, and have a good prospect of the gardens and of the river beyond. I am, myself, a barrister, without practice, with a snug income, and no one to please but myself. Above me there dwells a conveyancer, with whom I am only familiar by sight; for although we have met on the common staircase a hundred times

and know each other's names well enough, being Englishmen, we have—till a day or two ago—never spoken or even given each other a passing nod. I am of a friendly and neighbourly turn of mind, and would rather bear with a small inconvenience than try to remove it at another's cost. My neighbour's bell-wire has from time immemorial (as he says) passed through my living room, much to my annoyance, as it has always made a most discordant tweaking noise whenever it has been pulled, and this has been at all hours of the day and night; for my neighbour is an inveterate bell-ringer. Whenever my nerves have been out of order, after a convivial night, or on such occasions as I desired to apply myself to my books, this said wire has been a great nuisance. The other day, quite providentially, it snapped near to my ceiling, worn out, as I suppose, by the constant friction. My neighbour almost instantly sent our laundress with an imperative message to me, saying he would send a workman to repair his wire. I sent him word back that I would rather he would take his wire round the staircase, and not have it, as of old, through my chamber. He is highly indignant, and insists on his vested right, as he is pleased to call it, to have his bell-wire pass, as heretofore, through my premises. I replied he might have a vested right to repair his wire, but that he had no vested right to make an entrance into my chamber to do it; nor shall he or his agents do so, as I will take care. His vested right really is a right to be a constant source of irritation and annoyance to me (which his incontinent tugging at his bell long has been). How many so-called vested rights and vested interests are like my neighbour's, neither more nor less than rights to do that which is disagreeable to everybody else, and might be dispensed with without loss to the pockets or consequence of their owners? Hoping you will be of one mind with me in the matter—I am, &c.,

"AN OUTER TEMPLAR."

A CORRESPONDENT: In the article "Tufts and Tuft-hunters," a quotation is given (p. 273) from the excellent tale of college life, "Vincent Eden," which was published in "Bentley's Miscellany," 1839. Permit me to say a few words on this remarkable story. It was begun in the "Miscellany" for March, 1839. The same num-

ber contained the address of "Boz" on resigning the editorship of the "Miscellany" to Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, an instalment of whose "Jack Sheppard" is given, together with a portion of "Oliver Twist," with the illustration of "Fagin in the condemned cell"—perhaps the most powerful etching that Mr. George Cruikshank ever executed; an instalment of Lover's novel of "Handy Andy;" an Ingoldsby legend; an epistle in verse from Tom Moore to Samuel Rogers; and other contributions. Those were, indeed, the palmy days of "Bentley's Miscellany." The first portion of "Vincent Eden" was published without any author's name; the second part bore the pseudonym "Quip." At Chapter XI. the story was abruptly stopped, and has never been continued or concluded. Such as it is, it is a most amusing fragment. Its anonymous author is believed to have been an Oxford man, a Mr. Dickenson, who took the highest honours of his university, including a first class in classics, and the Ireland Scholarship. It has been stated that he went from Oxford to London, and there descended to the lowest depths of profligacy; that one evening he strolled, with his female companion, into a Wesleyan chapel, and there heard something that caused him at once to change his course of life; that he then went out as a missionary to some savage tribes, by whom he was killed.

IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED story of "Vincent Eden" is the following passage:—"They go down in the battel-bill," said Mr. Richardson Lane. 'You know why they're called battels, I suppose?' Eden expressed his ignorance, accompanied by a wish to be enlightened. 'Battels mean all such things as these,' proceeded his informant, pointing as he spoke to the commons of bread and triangles of butter which, together with an importation of Mr. Lane's in the shape of the half of a somewhat superannuated-looking college cock, formed their breakfast. 'They're called battels because we always quarrel so with the bursar about paying them. Spelt the same, did you say? Of course not. In the Duke of Wellington's and Deaf Burke's battles, the *l* comes first and the *e* afterwards. In ours, the *e* comes first, because it stands for *eating*; and the *l* last, because it stands for *lug-out*; which is the natural order of things, and fully accounts for the transposition.

Funny that, isn't it?" A year ago, when the subject of college dinners was debated in the daily papers, some of the undergraduates appeared to be of opinion that, too often, their fare was foul, and deserved its name of "commons;" and that the other word of "battels" was susceptible of the meaning which Mr. Richardson Lane has here so wittily assigned to it. The etymology of "battels" is, indeed, somewhat obscure. The word is applied to the dinners, breakfasts, and various eatables and drinkables obtained from the college kitchen and buttery; and it would appear to be a corruption of *patella*, a platter—the *p*, as was often the case, being converted into a *b*. A writer in the first volume of "Household Words" (p. 188), in speaking of his "old school," uses the word "battlings" as signifying pocket-money. But this was, probably, a local term; and, certainly, the collegiate battels have to do with provisions for the body, and not the pocket. In the last edition of Hotten's Slang Dictionary the word is given, but no attempt is made to solve its derivation.

IS ANY CHANGE operated on a man by a change in the velocity of his motion round the axis of the earth? Suppose, for instance, a dweller in latitude 60° were to suddenly change his residence to the equator, he would double his velocity. For while, at latitude 60° , he travels round with the earth at the rate of 500 miles an hour, at the equator he does 1,000 miles an hour. Again, at latitude 75° , the Greenlander is lazily carried round a paltry 130 miles an hour—while the man at the North Pole calmly revolves about himself once in 24 hours. Of course the motion is unfelt, because all things move together; but the change from a tropical to an Arctic climate is so great that it may possibly produce physical or mental effects of which we are as yet unconscious. Of course the steering of a ship from north to south must be sensibly affected by the constant acceleration from west to east. On the long railways of Russia, too, I believe it is found that the rails are uniformly more worn on one side than on the other, in consequence of this force.

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CHAPTER XXXI.



MR BENBOW was returning home, hurrying wildly along the road ; and with the terrible feeling at his heart that this was only a staving-off, as it were ; and that these difficulties were all closing in about him,

and that extrication seemed hopeless—must be hopeless. He seemed, too, to have lost that boldness which had been so useful to him in former days, and which brought him so successfully through many a difficulty. He thought wildly and desperately again and again : What *was* to be done? what *was* to come of it? Suppose he went away on the morrow—saw his son—told, or hinted even, all to him. It must be done—some step must be taken. Or, again, suppose he tried this woman in another way—humbled himself before her—threw himself on her mercy. As this thought crossed him, he heard the sound of wheels, and saw a Victoria approaching, with two ladies in it—one driving. Just as they passed him, he

recognized them. It was the actress and a friend ; and they were going in the direction of the town he was leaving behind. It was strange their meeting him ; and he looked confused, as he knew how they must speculate what brought him in that direction. The actress bowed to him and passed on.

At dinner that day there was a great party—an in-gathering of neighbours from all parts round—one of those solemnities the Duke almost revelled in, and which seemed a sort of coronation or enthronement. All the pundits and magnates were assembled ; and at the banquet the actress sat resplendent, in a dress of exquisite taste, with some friends, and looking marvellously handsome. There was great curiosity about her—she was so dazzling in her magnificence and brilliancy. It was noticed, too, that his Grace the Duke was exhibiting a little of his old weakness : being in one of those harmless fits of admiration for some particular princess, whom he exalted above all women, and thought perfection, for a month ; and that month, perhaps, only once in a few years. It was all very harmless indeed, and only made the Duchess smile.

Some fate had again placed Mr. Benbow opposite his enemy. He was forced to sit under the glare, as it were, of her face ; and it hurt his eyes and his very soul. In those eyes he read something malicious, something malevolent *a petto*. What was over him? He was in a fury with himself. He had lost all his old vigour and masterly powers of defence and attack. At last it came.

"We met Mr. Benbow to-day on the road to, and walking."

"Walking! Benbow walk! Incredible!" said the Duke. "He must have had some deep and secret plot of State in his head."

"Plot," said Mr. Benbow, coldly, but with whitening lips—"I have no plot or plots. A little private matter took me there."

"And a little private matter took *me*

also," said the actress. "Was not that curious, my lord Duke? There must be some sympathy between Mr. Benbow and I. And, a still more curious thing, it took me to the same place."

"To the same place!" he faltered.

"All for Mr. Benbow's good. Shall I tell the little history of my adventures of to-day? It seemed almost providential for your interest, Mr. Benbow."

The latter forced his thin lips into a smile.

"These secrets should be between you and me, Mrs. Effingham. We shall appoint a private time for it; and you and I, and no one else—"

"Oh, not at all," she said, gaily. "I am not going to have myself compromised in that way. What would you say, my lord Duke? The simple truth is, I had to go to the telegraph office in reference, alas! to one of my professional engagements. Yes, Mr. Benbow. And, ah! you had been there before me."

He gazed upon her in a sort of stupefaction.

Over his head swung the Sword slowly to and fro!

"See how guilty he looks!" she went on; "one would think it was a murder, or some 'Lady Audley's Secret'—some frightful bigamy—we were talking of. Well, I wrote out my telegram, and was in a sort of abstraction, thinking how I should compress forty into twenty words—we actresses, you know, must look after these trifles—when I saw on the ground at my feet—what do you think?—your familiar name, Mr. Benbow!"

"My name! How strange!"

"Yes, your name; only you were bisected—a 'Ben' on one piece of paper, a 'bow' on the other. I was at once attracted. You could not blame me, or think me too inquisitive. I saw other words in the same writing, lying at my feet. I thought they were private papers. I did not want others to read them; so I gathered them up, and brought them home with me."

"You did!" cried Mr. Benbow, starting up. "You dared to read a private telegram!"

"Dared, sir!"

"Really, Benbow," said the Duke, "you are going on very oddly to night. This is all so incoherent!"

"Dared! yes, dared to spy on me—to read what is considered private all over the

world! It is scandalous, disgraceful, unladylike! Yes, unladylike!"

"Hush, Benbow! you are mad!"

"Oh, my lord, you don't understand this! This is the gratification of some wicked hatred this lady has conceived against me. But I'll not endure it longer; it's going far beyond what is legitimate."

"My lord Duke, you must protect me against these attacks—which I don't deserve, surely."

"My dear Benbow, you are excited—something is on your nerves—remember—"

"I will *not* remember!" said the unhappy man, his hands clutching his hair. "This is all part of a system—you cannot understand it—a conspiracy to injure me, to ruin me! I know it! I have seen it for a long time!"

People sitting about him were amazed at this strange wildness. People farther off, catching only a stray word and noting his singular and eccentric behaviour, speculated upon what it could mean.

"My dear Benbow, don't let us talk any more about it. You are excited to-night."

"Oh, no!" said the lady, shaking her head, "he is not, indeed. It is quite rational, all that Mr. Benbow says. But what have I done? I did not know it was any harm to pick up a few fragments. I put them together for you; and—here they are. But it is no use, Mr. Benbow—it won't do telling him not to come. Why interfere with his Grace's plans and wishes?"

"My wishes!" said the Duke. "Mr. Benbow surely does not do that. You surely could not have taken such a step—telegraphed to your son telling him not to come here!"

The host was deeply displeased, and showed it. When the ladies had gone up, he said to Mr. Benbow, in a low voice, "I think that you owe me some explanation of all this, Benbow; and I must really ask you for it. You have gone on very strangely since you have been here."

"You must not mind me," said the other. "I have had a great deal on my mind lately."

"That is what they say. I don't profess to understand these things; but it really seems to me, from the strange, incoherent way you behave, that Mrs. Effingham has some secret of yours, by which she contrives to hold you in her power."

Again the wretched Mr. Benbow started

and shrank away. More of the net seemed to be winding about his limbs. What was he to do? What could he answer, except falter out some staggering excuse?

The Duke really began to think that he himself had been intended by nature for a statesman, he was so clever at "reading men's minds."

"Really, I don't know how to speak to you; but I think I am entitled to ask for an explanation as to why you should try and interfere with my plans and wishes."

Where were Mr. Benbow's wits? Where his diplomatic readiness at fabricating an excuse? Nothing would come to his tongue; he could invent nothing; he could only say, "You should trust me sooner than her, and she has some motive, some secret hatred to me, and—"

His host stared at him in wonder.

"This is all very strange, Benbow; I think you should keep yourself quiet, and not agitate yourself. You have been overworking yourself. You ought to take care."

The other caught at the suggestion eagerly.

"Yes, that is it, I do believe. I have had so many things to take my thoughts lately. My head gets confused among them all. But by and by I shall be all right again."

The Duke said nothing more on the subject then. Just as coffee came in, the evening letters were brought in with it.

"Ah!" he said, "one from Rosa."

They went upstairs. Mr. Benbow again much troubled; when the Duke strode over to him.

"I must insist on an explanation of all this," he said. "It seems you have put some pressure on your son and on my daughter to prevent them coming here—to their father's house. Of course, I can't interfere with your plans about him; but it seems ungracious and uncalled for, and I certainly must protest against any interference between me and my own daughter. Just read that letter."

Mr. Benbow read:—

"Mr. B. has telegraphed to his son that we are not to come to your house. This he has done in the most solemn and appealing manner; so that one really might think there was some awful crime upon his soul. I cannot accept the notion of having our movements controlled in this fashion.

Charles has scruples about it at present, but these cannot affect me. I shall be with you to-morrow, and we shall clear up all this business."

The paper all but dropped from Mr. Benbow's fingers. All he could murmur was, "Quite right and fitting; nothing could be more suitable."

His host turned away impatiently; and so that evening closed in. In his own room Mr. Benbow felt like some wretched gaol-bird in his cell, now at last under sentence of death—the days hurrying away, and drawing him nearer and nearer to an ignominious end. Yet this woman's coming was but the first stage: it would end in his son's arrival as sure as destiny; and *that* would inevitably cause the fall of the guillotine's knife.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AS he was pacing his room, in a perfect agony of mind, he heard a tap at the door which actually made him start. He opened it hurriedly, and saw, standing before him, the tall figure of Mrs. Effingham.

"Can you spare a few moments?" she said. "Let us walk out here in the corridor—or suppose we go down to that little morning room. I *know* that you wish to speak with me—or, at least, consult me in the present emergency."

His first impulse was to motion her away with both his hands, and cry, "I don't want you here, miserable, cursed woman! Keep out of my sight!"

But his prudence came to his aid, and forbade such a frantic and fatal exhibition. He only answered calmly, "With all my heart, Mrs. Effingham," and followed her to the room she had named.

He had the air of a criminal leaving his cell and following the executioner, so lofty and commanding was her bearing and manner, as she swept on in front.

The room was in rather a private part of the house, at the end of a long gallery. Everyone seemed to have gone to bed. She closed the door, and advancing to a round table, stood majestically on one side of it, so that it was between him and her. He saw that she was surveying him with an exultant air of triumph; and, in a tumult of passion and fury, he broke forth—

"Are you a woman or a demon, that you are going on in this way? There is some—

thing demoniacal in all this! I see it in your cruel, devilish eye. What does it all mean? What have I done to you?"

She shook her head.

"All in good time. But these are strong words to a lady."

"I don't care—I don't care!" repeated the unhappy man. "You know something, or you want to persuade me that you do."

"A farce!" she said, with contempt. "None of this acting to me. I am no child. You understand the situation; and you know that I know the reason of this guilty behaviour of yours. If you wish, let us drop these little amiable fictions which we have been acting to one another. Say so. It is for you to make the choice. Then everything will be far more intelligible, and much simpler for me."

"Speak out, then, in the devil's name!" he answered, wildly. "Assemble the whole household at breakfast to-morrow. Stand up and make them a speech. But if you do I will end it for you, and for myself, that moment; and it will be all the better. There are always plenty of carving-knives on the table, and I could not resist the temptation. I could not answer for myself in such a humour."

"This is very incoherent; but take care, and don't challenge me to anything, or that devil whom you seem to fancy is inside of me may tempt me to meet you in the same spirit. So take care, Mr. Benbow!"

"I won't! I am beginning to sicken of this life. I insist on knowing this—and you shall not leave this spot until you tell me what it is you intend to do: Have you finished with your fiendish persecution, or do you mean to go on? Say so, here on this spot—you wicked, malicious, hateful creature!"

"What if I make no answer? if I tell you that it is my purpose to let things go on as they are—hold everything in suspense; not to raise a finger, but let matters themselves settle the issue? What if I choose that course—out of a mere humour—what would you do *then*? As for your melodramatic threat of the carving-knife—well, I have a good mind to tell all out publicly at breakfast to-morrow."

"Again, I ask," he repeated, frantically, "what is all this for? How have I injured you? Surely you cannot be so dull, so rustic, as to bear me this ferocious enmity because I strove to prevent you marrying

my son. You are too intelligent for *that*. Say what it is you want. What *sum*—"

"Do not revolt me utterly, or make me lose all patience, and let the sharp, heavy Sword fall on your head before its time."

He started at this metaphor. It had often occurred to him, and it seemed very strange that it should be in her mind also. Did not all this look like some horrible closing in about him—this drawing him backwards into the *cul de sac*, whence there was no escape?

He was silent.

"No," she went on—"all in good time. Never fear—you shall know all at the proper moment. Trust me for that. You shall own that it is a reasonable explanation. Have no fear on those grounds."

He almost abased himself before her.

"Have you no pity? Are you a woman? What would you have me do? Say it, and spare us—spare me—all this disgrace and ruin."

"See how he asks me!" she said, "in that commanding, dictatorial tone, as if he were still master and would order me. Just think of this, Mr. Benbow: if ever, in your past life, some victim of yours, on whom your vengeance was descending, had implored your mercy, would *you* have tolerated his begging it in that lofty manner? Just think!"

The unhappy man did not understand what she meant, but accepted it in another meaning.

"If that is what you desire, most willingly," he said, "I implore you; say what you wish. How shall I ask you, or entreat? If you wish it, on my knees."

"I wish nothing," she said, with a curious look of expectancy in her eyes. "Why should I? It is your concern, is it not?"

He mistook this for a sign of relenting. He was not so powerless after all! And he actually sank upon his knees, and grovelled at her feet. It was a tableau almost theatrical—the cruel, haughty, bitter, truculent woman standing over her enemy, now at her feet! She seemed to feast on the sight—on his imploring face upturned to hers. For some seconds he remained in that humiliating position, and his eyes were so intently fixed on her that he forgot all about him. He heard and saw nothing: Even when she raised her hand and pointed to him as he knelt there, her face turned to the door, he did not look round. Suddenly, a

voice behind him cried out, in wonder and displeasure—

“Mr. Benbow!”

It was the Duke!

“This is most extraordinary, most unwarranted, Mr. Benbow. In this house,” he said, angrily. “It surely cannot be from so ridiculous a thing.”

Mr. Benbow, now risen, covered his face with his hands.

“What do you say, Mrs. Effingham? Surely some explanation must be given.”

“There, you see,” she answered, carelessly; “it speaks for itself. I am not called on to explain so evident a matter: make him do it.”

“I cannot believe it, for he has shown more dislike of you than admiration. I had no wish to spy on you or disturb you; but I go round my house sometimes at this hour, and I saw the light at the end of the passage.”

“I can say nothing,” faltered Mr. Benbow. “Some miserable fate is pursuing my steps—crossing me in everything. Indeed it was not what you thought! There was but one thing that could make me humble myself to this woman as you have seen. She forced me. She has all the hatred of a demon in her heart; and I tell you now, before her, that I am sick—weary of all this. If she does hold a secret—a family secret—over me *in terrorem*, let her tell it now, before you, and end all. Ah! see, she colours; she does not like this! Her demoniacal plan was to have this hanging over my head, like a sword, as she calls it—the ‘Sword of Damocles.’ She would like to have gone on torturing me at her pleasure—day by day, hour by hour—keeping the slow fires burning. But I have foiled her in this.”

She did look discomfited; but soon recovered herself. In fact, resumed in quite a changed tone:—

“Mr. Benbow really magnifies things too much. His mind seems a little upset by agitation. What he chooses to call a family secret—”

“No, no!” interrupted Mr. Benbow, wildly. “That is the truth. Don’t heed what she is going to say. Don’t listen to her. What I have told you is the truth. In her malignity she has ferreted this out; and I say again, let her tell it boldly, and end all.”

The Duke, much displeased, then said, “You don’t seem to see, Mr. Benbow, that

if there is any family secret—the disclosure of which seems to cause you such terror—it should not have been concealed when you were about to ally your family to mine. It must be a very serious, if not a disgracing, business.”

Neither said a word.

The Duke went on—

“When I see a man on his knees begging mercy, I may assume that there is something discreditable that he is afraid of having revealed. Yes, Mr. Benbow, this matter is assuming quite another complexion. I now have a right to know this secret. And I call on Mrs. Effingham to comply with your request, which you have made so despairingly and fearlessly, and say out boldly what all this is about.”

She paused; then said, calmly, “I am ready—quite ready.”

“For God’s sake, no, no, no—a thousand times, no! You will not destroy me—betray us all by such a thing! Oh! what shall I do? what *am* I to do? How can I make this clear?”

“See here, Mr. Benbow,” said his host, calmly; “it is evident this matter cannot stop here. It has gone too far. It is now nearly one o’clock; so take this night to think it over, and see what you had best do. But, I tell you plainly, in the morning I must have an explanation. This is evidently some discreditable secret which ought to have been, in honour, communicated to me. If all is not disclosed, I shall be under the necessity of putting the matter into the hands of a detective, who will discover all for me. Ours is too old and honourable a family to have anything secret whispered about it. So now you have fair warning. I will ask you both to meet me here in the morning before breakfast, and shall expect your reply. Good night!”

ON SLEEP AND DREAMS.

BY AN OLD PHYSICIAN.

A CERTAIN amount of physiological knowledge, and of information regarding the general laws of health, is now so generally diffused throughout all classes of society, that most of our readers are probably aware that the bodies of men and animals are constantly in a state of change; and that old, used-up matter is ever being removed from the various tissues of the

organs, and being replaced by new, derived from our food and from the air we breathe. The hair of yesterday, says Dr. Hammond, an eminent American physiologist and physician, from whose recent volume, on "Sleep and its Derangements," we shall borrow freely in these papers, is not the hair of to-day; the muscle which extends the arm is not identically the same muscle after as before its action; and this system of decay and simultaneous reparation is especially active in the brain. For while even those actions which are most continuous, such as the respiration and the pulsation of the heart, have distinct intervals of suspension—short, it is true, but very numerous—and the voluntary muscles have a far greater amount of repose, the brain (he adds) is never at rest except during sleep; and even this condition is often only one of comparative quietude. Its substance is consumed by every thought, by every action of the will, by every sound that is heard, by every object that is seen, by every substance that is touched, by every odour that is smelled, by every painful or pleasurable sensation; and so each instant of our lives witnesses the decay of some portion of its mass, and the formation of new material to take its place.

The necessity for sleep is due to the fact that, during the period we are awake, the formation of new cerebral or nervous matter does not go on so rapidly as the decay and disintegration of the old; and the more active the brain is, so much the greater is the necessity for sleep. This necessity for sleep is sometimes so urgent, that the strongest exertion of the will fails to neutralize it and to keep off the natural tendency to repose. Sentinels or sailors on watch—although knowing the risk they run if found asleep when on duty—are often physically unable to shake off the drowsiness that is leading them into peril. Soldiers have frequently been known to sleep on horseback during prolonged night-marches; and it is said that, on the retreat to Corunna, whole battalions of infantry slept while in rapid march. Damiens, if history is to be believed, slept on the rack, and it was only by continually changing the mode of torture that he was kept awake; and in corroboration of this remarkable statement, Dr. Hammond—who, as Surgeon-General in the United States army during the late American war, has had a vast surgical expe-

rience—tells us that he has seen individuals who had been exposed to great fatigue sleep through the pain caused by the amputation knife.

In illustration of the appalling torments caused by the prolonged deprivation of sleep, the following case (quoted by Dr. Forbes Winslow, "On Obscure Diseases of the Brain," from an American medical journal) may be adduced:—"A Chinese merchant had been convicted of murdering his wife, and was sentenced to die by being deprived of sleep. This painful mode of death was carried into effect under the following circumstances: The condemned was placed in prison under the care of three of the police guard, who relieved each other every alternate hour, and who prevented the prisoner from falling asleep night or day. He thus lived nineteen days without enjoying any sleep. At the commencement of the eighth day his sufferings were so intense that he implored the authorities to grant him the blessed opportunity of being strangled, guillotined, burned to death, drowned, garotted, shot, quartered, blown up with gunpowder, or put to death in any conceivable way their humanity or ferocity could invent."

If our memory does not deceive us, Mr. Froude, in his "History of England," mentions, in a foot-note, the case of a man named Findlater, who was condemned to a similar form of death. It is said that animal-tamers—lion kings and such like—resort to this means of breaking the temper or subduing the obstinacy of specially intractable beasts.

In discussing the causes of sleep, we must distinguish between what physiologists and physicians term the *exciting* and the *immediate* causes. The *exciting* cause is to be found in the necessity that at stated times the brain should enjoy repose, in order that its worn-out and effete tissue should be removed and replaced by new material. If the disintegrated tissues of the brain and other organs were retained, they would rapidly poison the blood and cause disease; and hence their due removal is provided for through the action of the kidneys.

The *immediate* cause of sleep is proved by the experiments and observations of many physiologists—amongst whom we must especially mention Mr. Durham, of Guy's Hospital; Dr. Fleming, of Birmingham, late

Professor of Materia Medica at Queen's College, Cork; Mr. Moore, of the Middlesex Hospital; and Dr. Hammond, of New York—to be referable to a diminution of the quantity of blood circulating in the brain. How, our readers may ask, can this be proved? In reply, we will give a few of the facts obviously tending to establish this theory.

Dr. Fleming, in the year 1855, while preparing a lecture on the mode of operation of narcotic medicines, conceived the idea of trying the effect of compressing the carotid arteries of the neck, which carry to the brain by far the larger quantity of its arterial blood. The first experiment was made on himself by a friend, with the effect of causing immediate and deep sleep. "A soft, humming noise," he observes, "is first heard; a sense of tingling then steals over the whole body; and in a few seconds complete unconsciousness and insensibility supervene, and continue so long as the pressure is maintained." Dr. Hammond tells us that he has only once repeated Dr. Fleming's experiment on the human subject; and in that case sleep, or a condition resembling it, was instantaneously induced—consciousness being regained as soon as the pressure was removed. The reason why he has not more frequently tried this method is, that he finds that on applying pressure to the carotid arteries of dogs and rabbits, for a longer time than one minute, convulsions generally follow the accession of sleep. As evidence of a similar nature, we may refer to a case, quoted by Dr. Hammond, in which a lady had both her carotid arteries tied—one seven years ago, and the other some years later—for the disease termed aneurism. The most marked symptom that followed these operations was persistent drowsiness, which was especially well marked after the last operation, and which is still troublesome.

Mr. Durham arrived at the immediate cause of sleep by the following experiment. In order to ascertain by ocular examination the condition of the circulation of the brain during sleep, he placed a dog under the influence of chloroform, and removed a portion of the side of the skull as large as a shilling, together with the subjacent tough membrane called the *dura mater*. He thus brought into view the highly vascular membrane of the brain known as the *pia mater*, which is traversed

in each direction by blood-vessels entering and leaving that organ. During the administration of the chloroform, the vessels became more and more distended with dark-coloured blood; but afterwards, as the effects of the agent passed away and the animal sank into a natural sleep, the surface became pale, many of the previously distended vessels ceased to be apparent, and the exposed brain, instead of bulging upwards, sank below the level of the bone. On rousing the animal, the surface became suffused with a red blush, and again became convex; moreover, the circulation increased in rapidity. After being fed, the animal fell asleep, and the exposed brain again became concave and pale. To obviate any possible effect of atmospheric pressure, a watch-glass was securely cemented to the skull, over the opening; and it was found that no alteration of the phenomena occurred. Hence he came to the conclusion that, "during sleep, the brain is in a comparatively bloodless condition, and the blood in the cerebral vessels is not only diminished in quantity, but moves with diminished rapidity."

By some unaccountable oversight, Mr. Durham, whose essay appears in the "Guy's Hospital Reports" for 1860, makes no allusion to the experiments of Dr. Fleming, which were published five years previously.

In all questions of disputed discovery (as in the case of Adams and Le Verrier) the matter is settled by priority of publication. Dr. Hammond gracefully yields his assent to this rule, although he had made similar observations to those of Durham at an earlier period (1854), and had arrived at similar conclusions. In that year, a man came under his notice who, in a frightful railway accident, had lost about eighteen square inches of his skull, there being a fissure of his cranium three inches wide and six inches long. The lost bony wall consisted of the greater portion of the left parietal, and part of the frontal, occipital, and right parietal bones—the parietal bones forming the greater part of the sides and top of the skull. Dr. Hammond attended him for epileptic fits; and soon ascertained that, at the beginning of the comatose or stupor-like condition which succeeded these attacks, there was invariably an elevation of the portion of the scalp covering the deficiency of the cranium; while, when normal

sleep had replaced the stupor, the scalp gradually became depressed. When the man was awake, the scalp over the fissure was on a level with the surrounding parts; during natural sleep the depression was most marked, and at the instant of awaking it rose to its greatest convexity. Dr. Hammond quotes a somewhat similar case, which had been described many years previously by Blumenbach, who observed the variations in the level of the brain during sleep and the wakeful condition; but, until his own case occurred, he had apparently overlooked Blumenbach's.

Dr. Hammond's attention being thus drawn to this subject, he next observed that, in young infants, the portion of scalp covering the anterior fontanelle (where, until bony deposit has been formed, there is a patch of parchment-like membrane) was always depressed during sleep and elevated during wakefulness. In the summer of 1860, before he had heard of Durham's experiments, he made a similar but more extensive set of experiments on dogs and rabbits, and arrived at the same conclusions. He has likewise made a special set of experiments to illustrate the condition of the brain during stupor—a condition quite distinct from sleep, although the two are often confounded. In the first place, stupor never occurs in the healthy individual, while sleep is a necessity of life. Secondly, it is easy to awaken a person from sleep, while it is often impossible to arouse him from stupor. Thirdly, in sleep the mind may be active, while in stupor it is for the time dead. And, fourthly, the causes inducing these two conditions are quite different: stupor being induced by pressure on the brain, intense congestion of its vessels, or the circulation of poisoned blood through its tissue; while sleep, as we have shown, is caused by a diminished supply of blood to the brain. In the former case the vessels of the brain are loaded with dark, impure, venous blood; in the latter they are comparatively empty, and the blood remains florid.

It has been already observed that the ordinary exciting cause of sleep is the necessity for periodically repairing the rapid loss of cerebral tissue that is always going on when the brain is active; but any other cause that is capable of lessening the quantity of blood in the brain is also capable of inducing sleep; and amongst these factors may be especially noticed—*heat, cold, di-*

minution of the power of attention, digestion, excessive loss of blood, and debility; the action of hypnotic medicines not falling within this category, and deserving separate consideration.

Heat tends to promote sleep, because in a comparatively high temperature the blood flows in excess to the surface of the body and to the extremities, and consequently in diminished quantity to the brain. We can, on this principle, often induce sleep by taking a warm bath, or even by putting the feet into hot water before going to bed.

In healthy persons, a slight degree of *cold*, after exciting wakefulness for a time, predisposes to sleep, by drawing the blood to the surface of the body; but exposure to an intense cold or to a sudden reduction of temperature occasions stupor and not true sleep, often resulting in death if the sufferer yields to the almost irresistible desire to lie down and rest. Instances of such cases are too well known to require any special reference; that of Dr. Solander's party, in an excursion over the hills of Terra del Fuego, as related in "Captain Cook's Voyages," is known to every intelligent schoolboy. Dr. Hammond was once nearly overcome by this effect of cold. In crossing the mountain-ridge between Cebolleta and Covero, in New Mexico, the thermometer fell in about two hours from 52° to 22° Fahr.; and so great was the drowsiness produced, that if he had not soon reached a rancho he must have succumbed. Even then, after being helped from his horse, he could not speak for several minutes. The sensations he experienced were pleasant rather than otherwise; and, with an urgent desire to lie down and rest, there was a feeling of recklessness which rendered him perfectly indifferent to the consequences. This is, probably, one of the easiest modes of death.

To *diminish the power of attention* usually requires only the operation of the will. When we isolate ourselves as far as possible from the external world, and restrain the flow of our thoughts, sleep often results. On this principle, persons in a wakeful state are recommended to go through a Greek verb, to count a hundred backwards, to listen to any monotonous sound—as that of dropping or running water, &c.

Digestion induces sleep, or, at all events, sleepiness, by the temporary flow of blood

to the vessels of the stomach during that process. When it is stated that the quantity of gastric juice daily secreted by an average man amounts to about one-tenth part of his weight, it will be readily understood how the brain and other organs must have their allowance of blood shortened to supply the gastric vessels with a quantity sufficient to yield such a mass of gastric juice.

The two remaining factors require no special notice.

The necessary amount of sleep for preserving a *mens sana in corpore sano* varies in different individuals. Infants and young children require far the most, and old persons the least, sleep. Perhaps seven hours is, as nearly as we can fix it, the average time that an average adult should devote to sleep. Active brain-work occasions a far greater demand for sleep than a good day's muscular exercise.

Numerous cases of prolonged sleep for weeks or even months are on record, some of which are undoubtedly authentic, and, probably, are analogous with the phenomena of hybernation and aestivation that occur in certain of the lower animals—as bears, bats, hedgehogs, dormice, and many fishes, reptiles, molluscs, and insects. These may be regarded as cases of trance rather than of ordinary sleep; inasmuch as, although there is no stupor, the patients cannot be roused. We may quote a few of the most remarkable of the well-authenticated instances.

Samuel Clinton, or Chelton, of Timbury, near Bath, a labourer, aged 25, apparently in sound health, fell asleep on the 13th of May, 1694, and could not be aroused. Food and drink which were placed at his bedside regularly disappeared, although no one saw him eating. At the end of a month he arose of his accord, and went to his ordinary work. Except that he never spoke for a month, he kept apparently well till the 9th of April, 1696, when he again fell asleep. No external irritant—as cupping or scarifying—could arouse him; and he lay in this state for ten weeks, after which his jaws became so clenched together that it became necessary to utilize a hole in his teeth made by his pipe, and pour a little wine into his mouth through a quill. About two quarts were thus introduced in the course of six weeks and four days, and he took no other nourishment. On the 7th of

August, after sleeping seventeen weeks, he awoke and dressed, not knowing that he had slept more than a night, till he went into the fields and saw the harvest being gathered in which he had helped to sow when he fell asleep. He remained well and at his regular work till the 17th of August, 1697, when he again fell asleep, and could not be roused by pricking, pinching, the application of hartshorn to the nostrils, &c., till the 19th of November; when his mother, hearing a noise, found him eating. She asked him how he did. He replied, "Very well, thank God." She asked him which he liked best, bread and butter or bread and cheese? He answered, "Bread and cheese." Upon this the woman, overjoyed, left him to acquaint his brother, and on their return to his room they found him as fast asleep as ever, and could not by any means awake him. He finally awoke spontaneously at the beginning of February, perfectly well, and remembering nothing that had happened during his long sleep; and this is the last we hear of him.

Passing over a large number of intervening cases, we will notice a very remarkable one, described by M. Blanchet to the Paris Academy of Sciences, and published in the *Comptes Rendus* for 1864. A lady, aged 24, who slept for forty days at the age of 18, and fifty days at the age of 20—including her honeymoon—at length had a sleep of nearly a year—from Easter Sunday, 1862, to March, 1863. By the removal of a false front tooth, she was fed with milk and broth. She was motionless, insensible to any external stimulus, and her muscles were in a state of contraction. The pulse was very weak, and the breathing scarcely perceptible. All the ordinary calls of nature were suspended. Her complexion was florid and healthy; and there was no emaciation. Except in the last particular, her case approximates to one that has recently attracted much attention in the Lake District. The difference may be readily accounted for by the apparently persistent and almost total fast of the girl whose case concludes this paper.

The following particulars regarding "the sleeping girl of Ulverston," as she was called in the local papers, have been just published by Dr. Barber, who attended the case:—Eleanor Addison, aged 11, is the daughter of a carpenter residing at "The Hill," Millom. All that the mother could

tell regarding the case was that the child had something like croup and low fever in the first half of 1868, and that she was removed to Ulverston for change of air on Oct. 28th of that year. At this time she was very weak, quite conscious, and able to speak. A fortnight after her arrival in Ulverston she ceased to take food entirely; for, after an attack of convulsions, she lapsed into a condition of insensibility, or "trance," as it was called. She remained fasting for fourteen weeks. She then awoke, talked, and had some wine and cod-liver oil, but no proper food. This lasted one month; and, when she "came round," she stated to her astonished relatives that she had been in heaven, and had angels about her—her little brother among them—and she was so happy in their company that she desired to return to them. She then relapsed into her state of trance. Dr. Barber states his impression as follows:—

"The girl is lying as if asleep, with her breathing and pulse almost imperceptible; the limbs cold and wasted, and the skin dry and harsh. There is great general emaciation, except in the face, which has the ruddy hue of health. There is no sensation anywhere but in the eyes, which are closed. On touching the eyelashes, the eyelid quivers very little, as may be seen in the case of a sleeping infant. The pupils cannot be perceived, as the eyes are turned up towards the roofs of the orbits. The countenance bears a happy ecstatic expression, ineffable pleasure being firmly depicted on the features, as if they were moulded into that form. Tickling, pinching, or tapping with the finger, neither excites reflex action in any part of the body nor disturbs the serenity of the face. There has been no action, either by the skin, kidneys, or bowels, for many weeks. The breath occasionally is very peculiarly offensive. The patient lies motionless; but there is no catalepsy. The back part and sides of the head and face are cold; but the upper portion, ascribed by phrenologists to veneration, hope, spirituality, sublimity, and ideality, is hot, and unmistakably supplied more largely with blood than any other part of the body. This fact, taken into consideration with the extraordinary visions the child related during her temporary recovery, is a remarkable psychological phenomenon. The only sign of consciousness is the slight inclination forward of the head in answer to

questions about angels, heaven, or her present happy state of mind. She does not make the least sign when interrogated upon any other subject. As the patient cannot swallow, the lips are moistened occasionally with water, or weak wine and water."

When she fell into her second prolonged sleep, he recommended inunction of the whole body daily with warm olive oil, and hot applications to the feet and legs and to the nape of the neck, with the view of promoting the action of the skin, of nourishing the body by absorption, and of drawing the blood from the head. We suspect that in attempting to carry out the last point he was in error; because in profound sleep there is generally too little, instead of too much, blood circulating in the brain. The treatment, he tells us, did not restore consciousness; but, oddly enough, had the effect of removing the strong spiritual impressions that previously existed. The serene expression of her face was changed to one of sadness and despondency, and she seemed to be suffering acute anguish of mind, tears often running down her cheeks, and faint sounds of sobbing being audible. She no longer replied to questions; and, as her last state seemed worse than the first, a new physician, Dr. Robinson, was called in, and Dr. Barber saw her no more. The inunction was continued; and, after twelve weeks were passed, she awoke one Sunday from this second trance and asked for porridge. From that time she gradually recovered. She was removed home in June, 1869, and now, a year later, is in tolerable health. In addition to the trance-like phenomena, the girl was without food for twenty-six weeks, unless she had been guilty of deception, which neither doctor believed to be the case.

There is a very remarkable disorder, endemic in certain parts of Africa, known as "the sleepy disease," "sleep disease," or "*maladie du sommeil*," which is regarded as incurable. For details regarding this curious affection, we must refer to "The Curiosities of Modern Travel," quoted by Dr. Hammond in pp. 289 to 292 of his "Sleep and its Derangements;" or to a later and more scientific account of it by a French surgeon, M. Dumoutier, in the *Gazette des Hôpitaux* for October 13th, 1868; according to whom the disease is met with only amongst the negroes of the coast, and probably those of the Gaboon and the Congo.

THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK IV.—CHAPTER V.

A DEAD HEAT.

AFTER the first race was over, and in the interval of three-quarters of an hour as shown by the times of the races set down on the card, but really extended to an hour by common consent of the officials concerned, luncheon was despatched. According to annual custom, Sir Harold's party was provided with a very handsome and substantial meal, in which a huge venison pasty—a right royal pie of most savoury ingredients inside, and covered without by a rich and melting paste—formed the *pièce de résistance*. Cold chickens, lobsters, sandwiches, salads, and all the other luncheon dishes, gave place, in the estimation of the party, to this magnificent pasty, which was pronounced excellent by them all, as it had been by some few of them once a-year any time these twenty years. And their luncheon was washed down with cooling draughts of iced wine, sparkling or still, at the choice of the individual who drank it. Sir Harold was seated in one of the carriages drawn up immediately in front of the Stand; his companions were Miss Mabel Despencer, looking very beautiful in her light and showy morning toilet; Miss Margaret, his sister, cheerful and ready with a kind word for everybody who came up to their carriage; and the old General, described in the list of stewards as General Browne, but known more commonly as "the General," by his friends private and public, occupied the fourth seat in Sir Harold's landau. Here the gallant officer sat—tall, bluff, and hearty beyond most men of his own age—attired in the checked handkerchief and waistcoat which are so well known on every racecourse in England, with his glasses in his hand, watching the doings of men and horses with a wary eye, having in his mind future handicaps he would be called upon to make, and determined that that day no man should be clever enough to throw any dust in the eyes of "the General."

Sir Harold was in good spirits and high good humour, and held quite a *levée* at his carriage; all his friends and acquaintances coming up to shake hands with him, and to

pay their respects, expressing the great pleasure they felt in seeing him well enough to be present on Malton Downs.

"Sir Harold is the best respected man in this county, I believe," said one of these friends to Mr. Childers, as they moved away from the carriage.

"He is the best fellow that ever drew a cork," was Mr. Childers's reply.

And Miss Margaret came in for much homage: Mabel Despencer, of course, receiving the lion's share of attention from the young men who strolled up to the spot where their carriage stood, in the long line of vehicles opposite the Stand.

Robert Mortimer, in his public capacity as the representative of Malton, felt it a duty to be present; accordingly, he had honoured the meeting with his presence, and occupied a carriage with Mr. Campbell and two other gentlemen of Sir Harold's party.

"What a scene!" exclaimed the M.P. and Under-Secretary of the great Pink Tape Office, as he contemplated with lofty disdain the toilers in the ring opposite. "I think, Mr. Campbell, we see at such places, and on such occasions as the present, a lower type of humanity than is to be found anywhere else—that I know of, at least."

Since Mr. Robert Mortimer's retirement from any active participation in the pleasures of the turf, he had, like many others of its former patrons, constantly affected to despise it as unworthy of estimation and regard.

But Campbell was intent upon observing the antics of a little imp of an acrobat, of years apparently much more tender than his juvenile experience, who was tumbling and vaulting and turning somersaults on a ragged piece of carpet at their feet.

"We have not had Charles to see us to-day," he said, presently.

"No; he has not been to visit us. Hardly knows where to find us, perhaps," replied his father. "Do you see the figure leaning against the pillar—on the steps of the Stand there—is not that Charles?"

Campbell turned the glasses which Mr. Mortimer placed in his hand in the direction which was pointed out.

"I can hardly make out whether it is he or not, the people in front there keep moving backwards and forwards before him so fast."

"I think it is," observed his father, again

looking through his glasses. "I can make Fairholme out, in the crowd there, just in front of the Stand entrance. Charlie is with him at the Park, you know. To tell you the truth, I rather wish he was not. I am always afraid of his getting into mischief when he is with Fairholme."

"Your son Charles is old enough, and I hope wise enough, to take care of himself," returned his old tutor.

"I am sure I hope and trust he is," said his father; "but Fairholme's set are so very fast, and play such a thoroughly reckless game at everything they do, that I am never easy when I know Charles is with them. He is so very easily led, and will do anything they propose, I know."

He continued to stand up in the carriage, gazing in the direction of the ring.

"I will walk over and find him, and add a few words to the caution I gave him before I left London," thought Robert Mortimer, as he strolled across to the Stand. "If he loses money at the rate he did last year, and spends it at the rate he always does, I can't go on paying for him much longer."

But he returned to Mr. Campbell, after his search, without having found his son, or without having the opportunity he desired of administering a severe caution on the subject of incurring liabilities that cannot be met. Considerably out of temper, he sauntered down the line of vehicles, nodding and now and then saying a word or two to his friends as he passed.

The second race followed hard upon the luncheon, and then the course was cleared again for the race of the day—the Berkshire Cup. John Butler's expectations were not realized as to the number of starters. Five animals were saddled in the paddock, besides Dinner-bell, out of his own stable, which was on the edge of the course, behind the hill.

"Well, Johnny?" said the Duke to his trainer, in the paddock.

"Yes, your Grace," said the trainer, who stood in his long-skirted coat at Dinner-bell's head, while the stable lads completed his toilet. The horse looked perfect. His bright chestnut coat shone in the sunshine like satin; and, as he stood quietly while the girths of the saddle were tightened and his cloths taken off, it was plain that he had the full confidence of his trainer.

"Fit as a fiddle, your Grace," said Johnny Butler, with his broad accent.

"You think he is?"

"Never saw a colt in better fettle. He's fit to run for a kingdom."

"I have backed him for one, Johnny."

"Might run him for a man's life, as far as that goes. He's done to a turn."

"Am I to put it down, then?" asked his Grace of Fairholme, patting his horse's neck with his lavender gloved hand. "There, there, Bell, my boy—quiet, quiet."

"You know what I always said about the colt."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, your Grace, that he's a bit of a rogue, if he ain't a coward. I'm afraid if anything collars him he'll chuck it up in a moment, and we shall be done for."

"Oh, he'll go all right this time, I know; I can see it in his looks."

"If he keeps his head in front all the way he'll win in a canter, your Grace; but if anything gets afore him, I'm afraid we shall be done."

"Not we."

"Well, I hope not, I'm sure. I should like to pull off the Cup very much."

"So should I; and I think we shall, Johnny. Which are you afraid of?"

"The Duke of Norton's filly. They tell me they have tried a very good mare—the same thing as Bella at a stun for the year."

"I don't believe she is within a stun of Bella. Look at her Ascot running! I could have beat her myself."

"The filly was a little off, your Grace, when she ran at Ascot Heath. If you recollect, I told you not to back her when they made her such a favourite for the Alexandra Plate."

"She's a stayer, I know," said Fairholme, lighting a cigarette. "As for being a little off, there's always some excuse to be made for a horse that loses, I find. And the more money they go and lose you, the better the excuses you fellows can make for the loss."

Johnny Butler laughed, and patted Dinner-bell's sleek skin, as the boy rode the horse past them in the paddock. He seemed to think it better policy to leave Fairholme's suggestion unanswered.

"Well, he'll win, Johnny, to-day," said Lord Epsom to the trainer, as he strolled lazily towards the spot where Fairholme and Butler were standing.

"Bar accidents, my Lord, he will."

"He hasn't got a very big heart, has he?"



Once a Week.]

“AT THE ‘BOTANICAL.’”

[July 2, 1873.]

"We aint found out nothing wrong with him," replied the wary trainer, resolute in his determination not to let out any of the secrets of their stable to outsiders.

"Do you want to lay?" asked Fairholme of Lord Epsom, in his quick, impulsive way. "Do you want to back the field?"

"I shall back your colt if you do yourself," said his lordship, quietly.

"Well, then, I am going to back him; so there is the straight tip for you, Epsom."

"Have you tried him to-day, then?"

"Half-past three this morning, when you were making your fortune at hazard, these fellows were out—weren't you, Johnny?"

"Yes, your Grace, we were early this morning; but this here Downs isn't what it was—we're infested and eaten up with touts and loafers. You can't give a horse a bit of a gallop but what they know more about your horses than you know yourself—"

"Rascals," said Fairholme.

"Blackguards," remarked Lord Epsom.

Both noblemen made use of a qualifying adjective before their nouns.

"I'd horsewhip them, Johnny," said Fairholme.

"I would set some spring guns about the galloping ground," suggested his older friend.

"We had a bit of a rough-up with five or six of his Grace's horses this morning," said the trainer, continuing his remarks. "I see them fellows on the ground at four o'clock; but for once we'd got the job over before they come—anyway before they stuck any of their ugly heads out on the Malton side of the Furzes. Can't have a day's quiet for 'em; and then they go and wire their information all over the country, and the stable ain't got a chance of getting a pony on to other people's hundreds."

This was an unusually long speech for the reticent John Butler, trainer to his Grace the Duke of Fairholme, to make on any subject; but this was a matter on which he felt very warmly, as nearly every trainer in England does, if you ask him his opinion thereupon. Johnny warmed with his subject, and at the conclusion of his speech blew his nose upon his spotted bandanna with angry violence.

"I'll stop it," said Fairholme, "if I thrash the scoundrels myself. I'll warn them off the Downs—"

"You have, your Grace," said the trainer, turning round calmly once more to his

patron; "and a dell o' good it's done. They've pulled the boards down twice."

"I'll prosecute them for trespass. The Downs are mine."

"They're like vermin, your Grace; they can't be got rid on with anything short of extermination."

"There's the bell ringing. Lead him out," said the Duke to a groom who had a white leading-rein fastened to Dinnerbell's bridle. The stable boy had given up the saddle to their own jockey, whose services were specially retained by the Duke. He paid seven hundred a-year to George Sharman for the first call on his services. It was due to the influence of the Young England party on the turf that a jockey at the head of his profession could earn an income as large as the revenue of a bishop or a minister of State. And Fairholme, their leader, set a noble example every now and then, promising his jockey the stakes if he won, and landed his patrons' bets for them on any important race.

"Here, stop a minute, George!" Johnny Butler called out, as the favourite was daintily picking his way through the little lane of people who opened a passage for him to be led out of the paddock, making very free comments on his condition and appearance, which were generally in his favour, and in high praise of Butler's skill in his profession.

"I beg your pardon, your Grace."

"Well, what have you got to say?"

They stepped aside a yard or two, to a spot more remote from the observing eyes of the horsey crowd in the paddock, who never took their eyes off Fairholme or his horse for a minute while he was there.

But, as we have said, he bore his fate well; and the honour of being the man who "belonged to" Pedagogue or Dinnerbell, or any other of his horses just then the favourite of the hour, never gave him the least trouble. He took it as a matter of course.

"I think," said the trainer, with an air of mystery, "I think we'd better just warm his courage."

"Wet his lips before he starts, Johnny."

The trainer nodded, and produced a gin bottle from the recesses of one of the many immense pockets in his long coat.

"Do as you like," said his Grace, carelessly.

The trainer beckoned the stable lad to

lead Dinner bell up to the spot where they stood. The horsey crowd followed.

"Hallo! they're going to give him a drop afore he starts," said one.

"Bad sign when they want that," said another.

"He allus wor a faint-hearted 'un. I know'd that from the first," said a third.

And they crowded round the little group—owner, trainer, and jockey.

"Now, then, stand a little back, unless you want to be kicked," said the stable lad.

The men behind the horse soon placed a respectful distance between themselves and Dinner-bell's hind-quarters. The lad placed himself in front of the horse, and held him firmly on each side by his bit. Johnny Butler uncorked his bottle and stuck the neck in the corner of the colt's mouth. Though a great part of the contents of the mysterious bottle ran down on the grass, Dinner-bell sucked at the mixture as if he quite approved of its flavour and of the proceeding generally—standing as quiet as a lamb during the operation.

"There," said Johnny Butler, as soon as the bottle was emptied; "now lead him on, Bill."

"Now you may back him," he said to Fairholme as they left the paddock together.

Fairholme smiled and nodded as he left Butler and entered the ring.

In the ring, the shouts of the layers were deafening.

"'Ere, on this race I want to bet."

"What do you want to back? Only give the animal a name."

"Long prices agen some o' these 'ere runners."

"'Ere, the old price. The field—the field—the field! Dinner-bell don't win for ten."

"Eight to one, bar two. Bar two, I'll bet eight to one."

"I'll bet and bar one. Bar one, I'll bet."

One little man on a stool was perpetually shouting, at the top of a harsh voice—

"The field for five—the field for five! 'Ere y'are, come on, the field for five—the field for five!"

Another man, with a gray beard and a bushy moustache, of unmistakably Jewish features, persistently called out the names of all the runners except the favourite, offering prices more or less tempting against

them, according to his estimate of their chance of winning, varying his cry by calling out, at spasmodic intervals—

"Here, nobody names the winner—not one of you names the winner!"

But these were the small fry of the ring, who bet odds in small sums only, and apparently live very comfortably, if not very reputably, on their winnings; for they are to be seen shouting and roaring in the old familiar voices at every race meeting, from Newcastle-on-Tyne to Brighton by the sea.

Fairholme walked through the crowded inner ring into the Stewards' enclosure, and chatted for a few minutes with some of his friends. The greater ring men clustered round the iron rails which divided them from the divinities in the select space, like birds of prey hovering over carrion.

"Your Grace," cried one, trying to catch Fairholme's eye.

"Agen Dinner-bell I'll bet," roared the Leviathan Flint.

"That Dinner-bell don't win," shouted another of the bookmakers.

"I'll back the field," cried Mr. Hardwick, with our friend, Horatio Grobey, at his elbow. "The field, a hunderd—the field, a hunderd!"

But for a minute or two Fairholme left them to themselves. Then, turning round and facing them all, he said, quietly—

"Now, what do you all want?"

They answered in a deafening roar, in the din and confusion of which the voice of the Leviathan was alone distinguishable.

"I haven't had a bet with your Grace to-day," said one, in a whining tone, when the noise had abated somewhat. "Let me lay you agen Dinner-bell."

"What are you going to lay me?" Fairholme asked.

"Even money, your Grace," said some.

"I want a slight shade of odds," said others.

"Two to one is what I'll take, then," said the Duke, turning on his heel.

"Don't 'e wish 'e may get it?" said a very little Jew, belonging to the small fry of the outer ring. This minnow had contrived to worm his way to the front rank of the tritons, "Just to see 'ow things vas a-goin'."

"V'y they're a-layin' odds like fury in the other ring, and the knowin'est uns is a-doin' it. I don't lay nothink agen the faverit'."

And he chuckled and laughed, and ran off at a break-neck pace to join Mr. Moses Abrahams, his "pal," outside. Mr. Abrahams at once put his lead pencil stroke through the name of the Duke of Fairholme's bay colt Dinner-bell on his list, where the names of the runners, and the odds severally offered against them by the enterprising firm of Moss, Braham, and Co., were displayed in legible characters, so that all who ran their way might read them.

Presently, finding it impossible to get a fair price against his colt, the Duke took the unfair price offered him to a large sum—taking out his betting book, the morocco covers of which displayed his racing colours, and, pencil in hand, filling pages of the volume with the name of Dinner-bell, repeated over and over again, until he had tired the layers out. His friends, seeing him in earnest about backing his colt, followed suit; and Dinner-bell became the hottest favourite for the Berkshire Cup since the establishment of that popular race.

"Where are you going to stand to see it?" asked Lord Epsom.

"I'm going over to Sir Harold's carriage, I think," said Fairholme. "I have not spoken to his people yet."

"I shall stay here and go up to the roof, I think. I hope we shall win. You'll have to buy me a railway ticket for town if we don't."

"We shall win easy," said Fairholme, with confidence.

"Hallo! I could not get close to you a minute ago for the crowd," said Charles Mortimer, as the Duke was crossing the course to find Sir Harold's carriage. Charles linked his arm in the Duke's. "I say, I hope to gad we shall do it. By Jove! I'm done if we don't."

"We shall win easy," the Duke told Charles, as he had told Lord Epsom.

"We must—we can't lose," hope being as usual father of the thought. "I don't see what there is in the race that can beat us."

"The other runners are not much of Cup horses, are they?"

"But is there anything we need be afraid of—eh, Fairholme?" asked Charles.

The Duke was hardly listening. He could see Mabel in Sir Harold's landau,

and was thinking of his little affair with her under the old oak in Madingley Chase.

"Um—eh—what do you say, Charlie?—I didn't hear."

"I say, is there anything in the race to be frightened at?"

"Oh, I don't know, I'm sure. A race is never lost till it's won, they say. Have you backed the colt for much?"

"I took your tip, of course."

"Well, I hope we shan't regret it."

"How can Dinner-bell possibly lose?" asked Charles; "that's what I want to know."

"Lose! he might tumble down on his nose, or never start—be left at the post, I mean—or run into the canal at the bottom of the course; break his leg, as Fitzroy did at Newmarket—twenty things he might do—but he won't."

"Then you are not afraid of the horses."

"Norton's filly is the only thing that can possibly do him. She might poke her nose in front. But he has not backed her for a shilling, and so I did not."

"Did he not?"

"You might back her if you like, now, and then you would be perfectly safe. You know there is time to go to the ring and do it."

"I don't want to throw money away," said Charles Mortimer. "You say Norton has not backed her?"

"No; nor anybody else, that I know of. Mine was the only one backed."

"I'll stand it out, then," said Charlie.

They sauntered up to Sir Harold's party, and soon were busily engaged in conversation, and on the look-out for the horses.

"I'll bet *you* a box of gloves to nothing mine wins," said Fairholme to Mabel Despencer.

"Ladies always stand their bets to nothing, do they not? I never recollect being paid in my life, and I have given away gloves enough, goodness knows," said Charles Mortimer.

"I hope that Mabel will always pay her debts, Charles," said Sir Harold, with a slight dash of asperity in his tone.

"Oh, yes," said Mabel, pleasantly; "I will pay my debts to you all, I promise you that."

"Well, then, Miss Despencer," said Fairholme, "I will do for you what the ring men would not do for me—I will lay you a fair price."

"What is that, Duke?" said Mabel.

"Two to one."

"Two boxes of gloves to one?"

"Yes, of course," said Fairholme.

"Here they are, here they come!" cried Charles Mortimer.

All heads were turned, and all eyes looking down the course, in an instant.

With the colours of their riders glittering in the sun, the six horses looked very pretty as they rounded the turn, and came into the straight.

"You are winning, Duke. My gloves are safe—and I want some new ones," said Mabel, tapping Fairholme's shoulder with her taper fingers.

"Oh, this is nothing—this is a long race, you know. You will see them pass you twice. The horses go by the Stand twice for the Cup."

By this time the horses were level with the Stand. Dinner-bell was going strong and well, and looked a winner all over. He was leading his horses by four or five lengths, and pulling George Sharman out of the saddle. The jockey looked the picture of confidence as they swept past.

"Go it, Dinner-bell." "Stick to them, George." "The Duke wins—hooray!" were cries that reached the ears of Sir Harold's party as the horses passed them.

There was a minute of anxious suspense. The six runners passed the level ground above the Stand, entered the dip, and were out of sight for a few seconds; came along with their positions unchanged, round the bend into the straight; up the broad belt of sward, lined on either side with crowds of people.

"The favourite wins in a walk." "The Duke wins. Hooray for Dinner-bell!" "Sharman's the jockey to do 'em!" exclaimed the crowd as the horses ran by them.

On the lower ground, the Duke of Norton's filly crept up—headed the favourite. Dinner-bell tried to cut it, but Sharman called upon him vigorously, and came again with one of his celebrated rushes.

"Thank heaven, we've won!" exclaimed Charles Mortimer.

"Yes, it's all right—we've just landed," said Fairholme.

One of his friends shook him warmly by the hand.

"The Cup will be a nice addition to your collection. It is a fine piece of plate."

"I have not been very near it. I saw it in front of the Stand balcony."

There was a shout from the ring that rent the air.

"Hallo! what the deuce is that about?" said Fairholme, looking quickly in the direction of the telegraph board.

The numbers were up. Two round O's side by side, and no number One.

"By Jove! a dead heat!" said the Duke, calmly. "I thought we had landed, I'm sure."

Charles Mortimer turned very pale. It was awkward that it was not over.

"Come across to the judge's box," said Fairholme, taking Charles by the arm.

"Yes, a dead heat, your Grace," said Mr. Clark.

"I saw it was a tightish fit," said Dinner-bell's owner. He was less excited than anybody.

"Well, Fairholme, what are you going to do?" said his Grace of Norton, coming up in a mighty fluster.

"Not going to divide—if that's what you mean."

"You run it off, then?"

"Certainly!"

"It was the greatest moral in the world that we won the second time, I thought," said Johnny Butler.

"So did I," said Fairholme. "We haven't hedged a penny."

"I am about done up," said Charles Mortimer, despairingly; "my luck is fiendish—always." And, as he walked away from the paddock, he said to himself, "I was mad not to get out when I had the chance. The governor won't give me a penny, and I dare not ask Sir Harold."

"The race after the dead heat for the Cup was very exciting," said Campbell to Erle.

"I felt no interest in it," replied Erle.

"I did though," said Campbell, "and I hoped the Duke would win the coveted trophy. They say his bets were very heavy, too."

"I have heard he has lost a very large sum on the day," said Erle.

"I confess I wished there were no races between the dead heat and its final decision," said Campbell, "I felt so much interest in the result."

"I am going to the Chase," said Erle,

"not back to Malton Park. Let us walk, the distance is not great, and I have something of importance to say to you—quietly, without interruption."

"Very good, I am ready."

"Let us take this path, which leads through yonder little belt of pines, and so avoid the crowd."

SOCIAL GRIEVANCES.—No. I.

A BIG DINNER.

WE are reforming everything nowadays but what absolutely requires it. Everything has been, is being, or is about to be changed, and no one is a bit the better. Of course, we don't discuss politics; but can the "people's William" honestly put his hand on his heart, and say that the British nation is one whit the better off for his beneficent reign? I trow not. Still, reform is required. A reformer is required. Down with social abuses! Down with the odious conventionalities of the abominable mahogany! *A bas* your morning calls—and ah, bah! too—your dancing teas, your dreary archery, your revolting croquet! The man is coming. The Rochfort of social nuisances is at hand. He will expose, and cut with no sparing hand, the hideous sores of society. Sir, I won't stand it any longer. It's all very well to say that it is not right to abuse the hospitality of your host; but what right has he to abuse my friendship by inviting me to a horrible entertainment which he calls dinner, with pastrycook *entrées* and pastrycook wine? Curse his impudence! For whom does he take me? Is he not aware that the internal machinery of digestion is delicate and complicated, and that his ghastly messes will as assuredly derange it as that, if you stick a nail into a balloon, it will go squash? But I will be calm. I will wield the scalpel with a gentler, but no less skilful hand. It is, after all, a subject more of sorrow and of sadness. It is true that I dined out last night, and that I have determined on avenging myself this morning. But if I can prevent one incompetent person from giving what he calls a dinner, or an unfortunate guest from going to partake of it, I shall not have dined in vain.

Let us begin with the first operation: dressing. You come in tired from your day's work or pleasure. You have won at whist, or had your article accepted, or had

your first brief. In short, the world has smiled on you, and you are looking forward to one of those nice little dinners that your dear Lucy prepares for you so skilfully. You propose to yourself—it being a *festa*—that you have just one bottle of champagne together, Lucy is so fond of it; when the moment you put your foot in the hall you hear her sweet voice over the stairs, "I've put your things out for you, my dear," and then the dreadful thought flashes across you that you have to attend the state dinner of—well, your own father, if you will. Fathers, I suppose, are not exempt from the weaknesses of mankind. So your pretty little dream of billing and cooing is blown to the winds, and up you go to your dressing-room, a being of dark imaginings. At once begins the misery, the pity of the thing. On a warm summer's evening, you have to swathe yourself in those hot black clothes, the very look of which makes you begin to use bad language. Now, why the — But I am losing my temper again! Why, I ask, should one be forced to adopt a costume to eat a meal in which is only suitable to mutes and servants? Servants, forsooth! If I wanted to impress upon my guests what swells I had in my house, I'd much rather have half a dozen of my club servants at my table than the same number of Cabinet ministers. Their appearance would certainly be superior, and their conversation and manners scarcely, if at all, inferior. Now, the first essential of enjoyment is comfort. Knickerbockers are the most comfortable wear. Argal, why don't we adopt knickerbockers as an evening costume? I don't suggest it because I have a remarkably neat leg, and a handsome suit myself, highly slashed, which I brought from Genoa some years ago; but they are the neatest, most comfortable, and the prettiest dress imaginable. H.R.H. and half a dozen lords, appearing in it at the Opera for one night, could set it going.

At length your odious toilet is complete, and you derive some consolation in looking at your wife, who is ravishing in her evening dress. Perhaps that is the reason men consent to go out to certain misery—they like to see their wives in a novel and pretty costume. But no—I forgot. In these days, it does not do for women to condescend to please their husbands. Husbands, indeed! Pardon the digression; but, upon my honour, I know a lady who

considers her cook, and maid, and female menials as her equals, and hardly allows them to do any work. Why, poor Jones came in late the other evening, tired and hungry; and Mrs. Jones would not allow the cook to be inconvenienced; and poor Jones had to grope about in the larder, seeking what he might devour. How would you like to partake of the meals *that* cook would prepare, my friend? *En revanche*, you would see her with the pick of her mistress's fallals on; for they have all things in common, these rather-too-early Christians—for the times.

Well, the cab, or glass coach—probably the latter—cost 10s. 6d., is at the door. It has been raining all day, and you don't like your wife running the chance of spoiling her dress in a wet cab. A partially intoxicated coachman closes the door, while you endeavour to instil into his grumous brain the address to which you wish to be driven, at which you arrive with more or less success. I think I agreed to say it was at my father's we were going to dine, to prevent any susceptibilities being wounded. We arrive, then, at my—your—anybody's father's mansion. I would have you know, because I don't think you do know—I didn't till the other day, and I know most things—that a “mansion” is a house which has a back staircase. There is instruction blended with amusement! If you don't believe it, ask the first auctioneer you come across. My father's house has a back staircase, therefore it is a mansion.

After the usual perversion and confusion of names—it is a wise servant that knows the name of his master's son—you arrive at the reception-room. And what a deplorable spectacle meets your eye! There are the master and mistress of the house—on all other occasions perfectly sensible, kind, good-natured, well-bred people. Sir, I ask you, how long is this state of things to last, when I am obliged to confess to myself that my venerated parent—oh, and yours too, my friend; everybody's, in fact—looks an A double S? He comes towards you, simpering a ridiculous hospitality, *se dandinant* on the tips of his toes;—

“And then, in the fulness of joy and hope,
Seems washing his hands with invisible soap,
In imperceptible water;”

while my poor mother, languishing on her sofa, keeps up the infernal humbug, all the time wishing we were on the top of the

kitchen fire; or, if she were not so kind-hearted a woman, even in another and a warmer place.

Then look at the guests as they enter the room. All wear the same artificial grin, to conceal the despair which, instead of hunger, is gnawing their vitals. The women settle down on the lounges and chairs, and at least have this advantage over men, that they can criticise each other's dresses. The men huddle together in corners like sheep, and dare not speak to each other if they have not been introduced. “Who is he?” I heard a lady—to whom I had spoken out of politeness, because she was sitting by herself and looked dull—ask another, the other night, in a tone of voice that clearly showed that she thought I was an impudent fellow for daring to address her. That is another matter, the humour of which tickles my fancy immensely. Why, when I am dining at Lady Patty Marrowes'—I only frequent the best houses—should I run the risk of being snubbed by my fair neighbour if I address her without a formal introduction? I remember, many years ago—*cheu! prateritos*—sitting next to Mrs. Shoddy at the *table d'hôte* of the Schweitzer-Hof, at Lucerne; and on my attempting to open a conversation with some trivial remark on the weather, she turned round on me, and said—

“Sir, I have not the pleasure of knowing your acquaintance.”

“Madam,” I neatly retorted—for in those days I would stand no nonsense—“there is more truth in your remark than you would care to acknowledge.”

But, if Lady Patty considers me a fit and proper person to invite to her table, why shouldn't her other guests, who don't know me, take me upon trust? It might be to their advantage, and could not possibly do them any harm.

Dinner is announced, and we are paired off to instant execution. No pains seem to have been bestowed in assorting the guests according to their tastes or opinions, which a little trouble might have easily effected. Thus, a terrible scowl settles on the noble brow of Professor Phossil, as he sees the learned Miss Jeaker, who is scientific *au bout des ongles*, whisked off by a young Guardsman, of whom his best friends can only say that he is perfectly gentlemanly, and that he can hold the lists against all comers at the “Tournament of Doves;”

while he, poor soul, is allotted to the sprightly Miss Aigrette, who will chaff him unmercifully, as he is certain to open the conversation by asking her if she has "any knowledge of the cosmical conditions which regulate the deposition of the strata of a system?"

Then we sit down—four and twenty people jammed up together, where sixteen would have been crowded. The dreary meal proceeds—I am not going to describe it: who hasn't experienced it?—the salmon, with "immense bols of lobster sauce," as Mrs. Haggerty writes; the saddle of mutton, with little floating islands of cold fat swimming about in the gravy; the boiled fowls, with the bill-sticker's paste—Pah! And you are fortunate indeed if you escape an avalanche of oyster sauce down your shirt front, hurled by the gawky hand of a hired waiter, who, if he is not incompetent, is sure to be drunk.

There is half an hour's respite when the ladies have left the room, and you are released from the impact of at least half of Mrs. Rumpleton's voluminous person on your knees, provided my excellent father has a good cellar, and is foolish enough to produce it before such a crowd. At all events, it is agreeable to my filial affection to watch the relief depicted in his countenance. He has weathered the storm; he is safe in harbour—not so trim, indeed, as when he sailed; he can hear the distant roar of the wind and the thunder of the billow—for Mrs. Peddle has just sat down to the piano upstairs; but his cares are over for the present, and there is a heartiness in his manner, which I wish he would display when I ask him for money, as he whispers—

"God bless you, my boy! take a glass of that claret, it's the Latour you like; and keep it to yourself if you can."

Still, a grim reticence overhangs us all. There is some fun in watching the knobs—which are so like some of his own palæontological remains—on old Phossil's nose grow redder and redder; but I dare not repeat the two or three good things I heard in the card-room of the Talma during the afternoon; the retort B. L. made to the country gentleman who made some observation on the gun licence—the latter may be in the room at that moment, I only know the names of two or three of them; what the Bishop of Z. said when, &c., &c. I don't know my audience, and I dare not

risk the chance of making some dreadful *brioche*.

There remains, then, the rest of the evening, which, if you are a bachelor, is easily surmounted by walking out of the house. If not, up you go just in time to catch Miss Quacke's artistic rendering of Campana's "M'appar sulla tomba," which she pronounces "Ma, Pa, Sue, Lartomber," as if she were describing the various members of her family. The infliction is accompanied by the rattling of cups and saucers, which afford an agreeable occupation for those gentlemen standing about the room who don't know what to do with their hands. I will not now enter on the feelings of the audience, as they will be described on a future occasion, when music is discussed as a social grievance. Miss Quacke's song is the last straw, and everyone bolts. I put Lucy into the fly, and walk home, smoking my cigar.

"Jurant mais un peu trop tard,
Qu'on ne m'y prendra plus."

TABLE TALK.

"THE FOOD JOURNAL," five or six monthly numbers of which are now published, is, we should think, likely to do good service in exposing the adulteration to which many of the necessities of our lives are subjected before they reach our tables. Cocoa, an article which is most extensively advertised, is very liable to be adulterated with different foreign substances. The microscope may be easily applied as a means of detecting the presence of matter other than the cacao seed, finely powdered. Sago, flour, and common arrowroot, are made use of in the adulteration of cocoa; and both these substances, together with ochre, and other colouring matter used for the production of cheap cocoas, may be discovered by applying to them a microscope of moderate power. The simplest method of procedure is to make a solution of a few grains of cocoa, and mount it on a glass slide. The difference in the granules in solution is readily apparent; and to such an extent is the adulteration of this breakfast beverage carried, that, in many of the cheaper preparations sold to the public as *cocoa*, only one-fourth part is pure cocoa, the other three-fourths being composed of starch and sugar. We only take cheap cocoas as an example of the extent to which the system of adulterating

our food and drink is carried by the manufacturers who supply us with them. Many other common necessities of life are dealt with in the same way. Now, adulteration may have one of two objects: either the maker and vendor cheat us by selling an adulterated article as a genuine one, for the sake of making an unfair profit on the sale of such commodities; or they adulterate their goods for the purpose of producing a cheap article, which, though sold at a fair profit, competes unfairly with the genuine article, and deludes the public, especially the poorer classes of purchasers. The latter description of vendors are deceivers, and deserve exposure; but the former rob us, and ought to be brought under the lash of the law.

THE BRIGHT YELLOW and drooping blossom of the laburnum is very beautiful. Our cottagers call it "the golden chain;" and, like all their homely names, it is apt, and, in this instance, is poetical also. I do not often find fault with Tennyson's adjectives and epithets; for no writer, in poetry or prose, more carefully selects them than he. But when he speaks of "laburnums dropping wells of fire," although I see his meaning, yet I think his metaphor more beautiful than true. The yellow of the laburnum is too pale for the blinding glare of real fire, though it might be counterfeited in pyrotechny. Among the fireworks at the Crystal Palace last year, a "golden birch tree" was introduced as a novelty that proved a decided success. Would not the representation of a golden laburnum tree be even more successful, and, as Caleb Plummer would say, "Nigher to nature for the money"? But, if I cavil with our Laureate's laburnum metaphor, I must quarrel with that advanced by Mr. Calverley in his translation of Theocritus, when he speaks of "beards that rival the laburnum's gold." I have heard of a "yellow-haired laddie;" but, surely, a man with a beard like in hue to the laburnum was never yet seen, in Greece or elsewhere. The tree with the golden tresses might be an allowable metaphor. Did you ever notice the peculiarly delicate fragrance of the laburnum? It resembles the purest eau de Cologne. I wonder if that scent is ever manufactured from the laburnum blossom? Tell us, Mr. Piesse. We cannot expect to be told by any of the Jean Marie Farinas who inhabit the Place

Juliers and other quarters of that most odorous city of smells, wherein, as it is said, they christen their children by the name of Jean Marie Farina, in order that they may have a legal claim to a title of such commercial value. Perhaps Cologne and its water under any other name would smell as sweet; but I question if it would surpass the delicate aroma of the scent of the laburnum, though, at its best, it may equal it.

A CORRESPONDENT: In your "Table Talk," p. 153, it is correctly noted that, in the Prayer Book, "mattins" is spelled with a double *t*, although the word is more commonly spelled "matins," as in the instances there cited from Shakspeare, Scott, and Tennyson. In some of the earlier editions of Milton's "L'Allegro," the word is spelled with two *t*'s in the line "Ere the first cock his mattin rings;" and Sir Samuel Garth, in his poem of "The Dispensary" (published in 1696) has the line "The chanter at his early mattins yawns"—a line which, probably, might be literally applied to many a ritualist at the present day. Dryden, too, in his version of Chaucer's "Cock and Fox," has the following lines:—

"More certain was the crowing of this cock
To number hours than is an abbey clock;
And, sooner than the mattin-bell was rung,
He clap'd his wings upon his roost and sung."

In "Paradise Lost," Milton speaks of—

"The shrill mattin-song
Of birds on ev'ry bough."

Young, in the "Complaint" (i.), says, "The sprightly lark's shrill matin wakes the morn." Spenser, in his "Epithalamion," says, "The merry lark her matins sings aloft." But Somerville, in his "Chase," uses the word in a very unusual way:—

"The pack awaked,
Their matins chant."

Herrick, in his song "to Corinna, to go a-Maying," says—

"When all the birds have matins said,
And sung their thankful hymns; 'tis sin,
Nay, profanation to keep in,
When as a thousand virgins on this day,
Spring sooner than the lark to fetch in May."

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MEMOIRS OF A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY.

BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

CHAPTER XXXIII.



THE

DUKE having left the room, Mr. Benbow was rushing away, exclaiming, "Miserable woman, this is what you have contrived! I could kill you!" but she called

to him in an imperious tone to return, and said—

"Well, what do you mean to do? What story will you invent for him? The matter cannot rest here."

"Leave me. Don't torture me any more. You have done all this on purpose."

"Perhaps I have," she answered.

The host had taken his way full of wonder and anger from that extraordinary scene. We have seen what his character was—one that was sensitive in the highest degree to its own dignity, and that could be easily worked on. The sort of exhibition he had just witnessed seemed to him utterly ab-

normal—a violation of all that had hitherto fallen within his experience. He hardly knew how to look at it, or to begin looking at it. In this doubt and trouble, he be-thought him of Mrs. Sheldon, and sent to ask her to come and speak to him.

She came, and he told her the whole scene he had just witnessed. It was so odd, so singular! And what did she think of it?

This lady had hoped to ally the Duke's daughter to her own son, and therefore always regarded the Benbow alliance with dislike.

"I always told you, Duke," she said, "that one can never be sure of these people who have made themselves."

"But he was of good family. I took care to make that out."

"I don't know," she said; "but my poor husband, when he commanded the regiment, always used to say, 'Beware the ranker!' I agree with you: there is something discreditable or disgraceful concealed here."

"Good heavens! You think so! Our noble house, without a stain on it for generations! What am I, what are we, to do?"

"O, it must be cleared up. They must explain—that is only owing to you, as head of the family. The first thing in the morning, I would require distinctly a complete explanation from both parties. As for that actress-woman, I know that you are partial to her, so I suppose we must not say anything against her. But the stage—the stage!" and she shook her head.

"It was *he* who forced her in upon me. I never heard of such a thing. The whole thing is coming back upon me. I see how it is at last!"

"Yes," she said, "you are quite right. You have found the solution. It is some low and disreputable business; and that man has chosen to insult us and you by making this house the scene for carrying on a low intrigue of that kind, and with a crea-

ture of that sort! Cousin, you have hit on the true solution. No matter about his age, and the pretence of being given up to business. Very often, these elderly men are mere wicked hypocrites."

"You are right," said he, after a pause. "I shall know what to do now. It is a very gross insult, and it has only served me right. I shall take a very decided course in the matter. Good night."

With the morning, Mr. Benbow was up betimes. Indeed, he had scarcely been to bed—had certainly not slept at all. What miserable plans had all but "boiled" in his seething head! Where were his wits—his readiness—his fertility of device, which had raised him to greatness? He could think of nothing. As he looked in the glass, he saw a pale, ghastly face, with, as it seemed to him, Death written there. He wished, indeed, that gaunt severer of Gordian knots were come——

But, instead, there came a knock at the door, and his host entered.

"I do not think it necessary," he said, quietly, "to require the appointment which we made last night to be kept. I think it below my dignity to have any dealings of the kind. I want no explanation—for I know the truth now."

Mr. Benbow started back, and part of his white face turned even whiter than the rest.

"I think," went on the Duke, colouring, "it was a very uncalled-for proceeding—an insult to my family. I have not deserved such treatment. To choose my house as a scene for carrying on a low intrigue!"

At last, something of his old intelligence came darting back into Mr. Benbow's head. Here was salvation—rescue—for a time at least!

"A low intrigue!" he repeated. "You could hardly suppose——"

"Make no excuses, I beg," went on the other. "But you must have expected, after last night, what I have now determined on. You and that lady must leave at once, and choose some other house as the scene of such things. It is really humiliating in one of your age! And to descend to what I must call the mean shift of keeping your son from my house, for fear he should interfere with this ridiculous infatuation!"

Better and better. Never did Mr. Benbow act so well. He did not care about

the degradation—the humiliation. It was safety—for a time even.

"What can I say?" he faltered. "No one is secure against these things. She has been very unkind to me. But she is very beautiful. Laugh at me, if you will—despise me! But what can I do? Pity me!"

"What a confession! It humiliates me to listen! But stay. What did you mean by saying that she hated you?—that she had a secret, and had you completely in her power?"

"So she has," he answered, excitedly. "That was the truth. But you know to what shifts a person in my state of mind may be reduced. As you said the other day, I am not quite myself. I have overdone it. Consider what my life has been—how everything has been overstrained and overtaxed with me. You must have indulgence, and I know you will."

The Duke relented. There was something so piteous in this appeal—so imploring; something, too, so flattering to his superiority, that he suddenly **changed** his tone.

"You see, all this is so extraordinary! I have just had a letter from Rosa, who cannot come, it seems. She says your son Charles is sick, and she must **not** leave him. It may be so, but really I **know not** what to believe. There are such **strange** things going on about us! I don't **wish you** to go; but I must insist on that lady withdrawing."

Here was a reprieve! After all, everything was not telling so terribly against him. She leaving the house—they not coming! There would be no meeting, then.

"No," said Mr. Benbow, with dignity; "do not let me stay either. I think I must really go to some seaside place at once, and try to recover myself. My nerves seem all gone. I get no sleep at night. I am utterly unstrung."

The host looked at him with compassion.

"I think you are right. I would do something of the kind."

"Only oblige me in this," said Mr. Benbow. "Don't *send* her away. You know not how vindictive and furious such a mortification will make her—not to you; she can do nothing to you. But I shall be the victim."

"Well, you can arrange it with her. I leave it to you."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHEN the actress came down, Mr. Benbow met her in the corridor.

"You have heard?" he said. "They are not coming. Charles is ill, and she cannot leave him; and—I am going away at once."

Her eyes flashed.

"What is this! New plotting?"

"Nothing—as I live—as I hope to escape disgrace in this life—"

"And punishment in the next," she added.

"No; the Duke will tell you himself. He has got the letter. Do what you will."

She smiled. It was like a fisherman holding his rod, and letting the fish swing.

"Well, what shall I do? I must think of that. There is no hurry, you know. We can let the Sword swing away."

He could not endure to stay longer, to face those prying, inquiring faces that, by a sort of instinct, would get at the truth that there was something curious going on. He had lost all his old strong nerve, which would have helped him to face a crisis of this sort. Above all, he shrank from meeting *her* before them: that pitiless eye resting on him; that cruel soul amusing itself by torturing him in public—revelling in his agonies.

He had made up his mind to leave privately, and at once; and was putting up his things hurriedly, when he heard the sound of wheels. Presently, a lady's trunk was carried down, and placed on the top; and then the lady herself followed. It was Mrs. Effingham. He heard the door shut, and the carriage drive away.

He drew a deep sigh of relief. He stretched out his arms, and rubbed his eyes. A new reprieve. After all, there was hope. He was not quite abandoned. But then came the question, where was she gone? Possibly to the scene of danger.

He was not long in doubt, for a letter was brought in to him. He knew the hand at once. It was very short, and ran—

"Among other obligations, I now owe you the one of being expelled from this house—an act done politely and graciously; but, at the same time, impossible to understand in any other sense. It has brought you a reprieve, no doubt; and, chance

having so favoured you, you naturally look forward to complete escape. I shall not take the trouble to dispel your delusion. Perhaps I am weary of the business. Perhaps I have other things to engross me. Perhaps I want money, and must make it. You are welcome to all these speculations. For the present, I go back to my profession."

He wiped his damp forehead, and again sighed a long, deep sigh. She had not purpose, after all: was not like him, who was not easily daunted by a repulse. Was there ever anything so providential as that failing to come of his son and daughter? ~~Without these actors~~, she could not play out her game. If she dared to say such a thing unsupported, who would credit her—her, a mere low, scheming actress—an adventuress? At all events, here was space—breathing time; and with a bright, airy face, and his old spirits all assumed, he presented himself at breakfast.

The Duke at once saw the change, and was relieved. Never was Mr. Benbow pronounced so agreeable. He suffered himself to be "rallied," as the phrase goes, on his partiality for the departed actress, and the power her charms had over him.

"But you see what spirits I am in," he said, "now that she is gone. I bear up wonderfully."

The host looked on and listened. Now that Mr. Benbow was his old self—the powerful mind that triumphed over every obstacle—he began to lose sight of his old suspicions, and was ashamed of the little scene of last night. But for Mrs. Effingham he had no such compunction. He had begun to think her a "dangerous woman;" and now that she was gone, the ladies all began to enlarge, in their own artful way, on her merits and demerits—on the latter in preference. At another time, too, Mr. Benbow's pride would have made him resent the speeches made to him by his host, whose hospitality he would have quickly renounced, and at once. But he dared not go yet—leave the ground unprotected and open for the return of his son and daughter, or of that adventuress. So he must wait—wait on and watch—for two or three days more.

The usual routine succeeded; Mr. Benbow exerting himself, in some minor matters, to help the Duke, and forward his

interests. At last, there arrived news from his son. He and Lady Rosa were gone up to London for medical advice. They had taken a house at Kensington. The town doctor had pronounced that the invalid must be taken great care of, but would presently be restored to health.

The house was one of those mansions described as "desirable," in the odd dialect of agents and auctioneers; though why a house and offices should have that term applied to them more than any other object for which a heavy price is paid seems incomprehensible. No one speaks of a desirable carriage, or horse, or yacht—save, indeed, it be offered at a price below its value. It was one of those semi-old houses in which, like the cutler's stocking, it was hard to distinguish the ancient portion from the modern; with a garden and gateway, and some thick, shady old trees about it—giant, solemn, gloomy sentries, who had been on the watch for a century at least. It was called Lime Tree House.

All this was written down to Banff by Lady Rosa, while Mr. Benbow was there, and he listened complacently; for all these were so many guarantees for their being at a distance. As for the actress, she would be lost in the provinces—for the present, at least. By and by he would find out a way of dealing with her. The party at Banff then began to drop away—fining down, as it were. It was presently felt, without official announcement, that it was to end; and Mr. Benbow was the last guest that departed.

He repaired at once to his own home, and there—very much like a man who, under pressure of some terrible danger, say, in search for a person concealed, acts a smiling, careless part—all his gay manner left him, and his old despondency returned. Again came the old question, "What was to be done?" Something must be done. Such another escape as he had just had would be next to ruin. After much deliberation he determined on one course, which seemed hopeless and even desperate. If she were so vindictive, and with a woman's vindictiveness, it did not seem likely that she would sacrifice any darling plan of revenge for money. But still, human nature was such it could rarely hold out against a bribe, if the amount was sufficient. He must try that; and, after some deliberation, wrote to her. He had discovered her

address without much difficulty, through the theatrical paper. But what he read there alarmed him a little. She was now engaged at the greatest and most important theatre outside London; and there was a sort of flourish about the celebration of her efforts which made his heart flutter. All this was like the spreading ripples after a stone has been thrown into the water: by and by the farthest ripple might reach to London; and, indeed, it *had* reached in one sense. For here, in a cheap evening paper, in its "dust-bin" corner, headed "Gossip from the Clubs"—which it possibly was, only the channel seemed to be the head waiter or steward—was a statement referring to her, which set out that a western manager had been lucky enough to stumble against a "theatrical nugget," and was the "charterer" of a new actress with exquisite charms of person and histrionic powers. This, his instinct told him, referred to Mrs. Effingham. He would lose no time; and he wrote to her.

The purport of his letter was this: it was complimentary, owning that her genius was superior, that she had mastered him, and that he was ready to treat unconditionally. Let her name her terms. He would go to the utmost extent he could afford; and if an annuity of fifteen hundred a-year could secure her permanent absence from this country, he would cheerfully, and at a terrible sacrifice to himself, make it up.

STARTING AN EVENING JOURNAL.

A READING.

BY LITCHFIELD MOSELEY.

WE were five. I had £100, Jones £150, Tomlinson could muster £70 or £80, Poddles knew where to lay his hands on £200; and last, although not least, Miss Deborah Crochet, a strong-minded female of uncertain age, but weak as regarded funds; and we determined to start a newspaper. With this object, a meeting was called at my rooms in Bunker's Inn.

We had all of us more or less flirted with the pen. Jones had for six months done the musical notices for "The Fiddler;" I had been assistant junior dramatic critic to the same; Tomlinson had contributed to the periodical literature of the day—*id est*, the "Penny Romances" (indeed, his "Bold

Buccaneer of the Brazils" had been an enormous success, and was then in its second edition); Poddles had distinguished himself as a penny-a-liner; and Miss Deborah would be an acquisition to us, as she had written many stirring articles on "Woman's Rights" in "The Dust-bin." In my position as chairman of our congress, I put the question—"First of all, Miss Crochet and gentlemen, what sort of paper is it to be—high class, low class, serious, comic, Liberal, Conservative, Radical, Independent—daily or weekly?"

"Serious, by all means, my dear Mr. Bobbets," said Miss Crochet. "I, for one, would not sully the lustre of my pen by writing for a vulgar comic periodical."

"Make it a serious weekly," exclaimed Tomlinson; "and then we shall have lots of time to prepare the matter."

"Won't do at all," interrupted Jones; "too many new weeklies already. It must be a daily."

"I am quite of your opinion, Mr. Jones," said *the Crochet*.

"Morning or evening?" I asked.

"Evening, by all means. I'll tell you why. A morning requires no end of original writing, necessitating an immense amount of labour and trouble; while an evening will cost us next to nothing, being made up of little bits, *on dits*, odds, ends, tittle-tattle, and scraps collected from the 'mornings'; with the smallest possible amount of original stuff, mostly 'Police Intelligence—This Day,' which may be had gratis; Markets, ditto; 'Desperate attempt to set fire to the Marble Arch,' and things of that description; the principal expense being the foreign telegrams, of which two or three may be crammers."

Here all laughed but the Crochet, who pretended to be shocked.

"To work a morning we should require a staff of contributors, while we can easily do an evening ourselves. For example: I'll be Special Correspondent at Paris, Naples, St. Petersburg, Madrid, San Francisco, New Zealand, and Calcutta. And this is how I propose to do it:—Buy up all the 'mornings,' look them through, take a pen, cut a little from one and a little from another, and write an original communication. It's easily done, and no one will be a penny the wiser."

"But, then, Mr. Jones, that will be a deception on the public," said Miss Deborah.

"What does that matter, my dear madam," answered he, "if we can save money, and they don't know any better? Besides, our articles will be *founded on fact*."

"At any rate, that is consoling," said the Crochet; "as I could not lend *my* name to any publication that was conducted on anything but the highest principles."

"Just so, Miss Crochet; pray don't alarm yourself on that point. To return to our subject. If we're much pressed, I don't mind throwing in the Parliamentary as well."

"Jones, you're a positive genius!" I exclaimed.

"Nothing of the kind; but I'm practical. Our friend Poddles, here, is of an inventive nature; and he can give us some striking articles of this kind, which will look attractive on the show-bills:— 'A baby poisoned by eating three vegetable marrows and a Bath brick,' giving baby's name, parents' pursuits, full particulars, some out-of-the-way place no one ever heard of. Twice a-year, at the least, he can give us— 'Attempted assassination of the Emperor of the French,' which will command a brisk sale, and can be contradicted next day; 'Alarming conflagration at Terra del Fuego'; 'Capture of a whale at Battersea,' &c. But I am certain that Poddles's imagination will not require stimulating, and I think we may with safety leave that department in his hands."

"I sincerely trust, Mr. Poddles, that you will be prepared to vouch for the accuracy of any statements you may publish," said Miss Crochet.

"Certainly! madam, certainly!"

"Oh! Poddles will vouch for anything, Miss Crochet," said Jones.

"I'm glad of that, as it will remove the responsibility from my shoulders, and I really could not lend my name—"

"Of course not, madam, of course not! But Poddles's statements will not interfere with you at all."

"In that case, Mr. Poddles is at liberty to state anything he pleases."

"Tomlinson," resumed Jones, "you're the man for the agony or sensational articles—hot, strong, sentimental, pathetic; somewhat in the style of your own romances. Something of this kind:— 'Seven thousand five hundred years ago, before the warm

and life-inspiring rays of the bright orb of day had shone upon this terrestrial and corruscating ball—before the mighty waters that now in peals of liquid thunder surge over the majestic slopes of Niagara, and from thence to the Black Sea and the Bosphorus; washing in their pathless track the lava-laden shores of Naples, and the Scylla and Charybdis of ancient story—before the vast atomic concourse, in its frailty and beauty, had been drawn together as by the mighty hands of some magnetic influence—when the whole earth was ocean, and Time was in its cradle—or, more correctly speaking, in its long clothes,' &c. That's the way to pitch it, when you are dealing with astronomical or philosophical matters. When a great man dies you can commence:—"One chilly evening in the autumn of —— (giving some date or other, about half a century back), an aged man, accompanied by a small boy—his junior in years—might have been observed threading the mazy labyrinths of Hampstead-heath, and ever and anon casting his eyes inquiringly in the direction of Pentonville. Few persons who looked upon that interesting couple would ever have imagined that that small boy would become a man—a man whose name is famous wherever the English language is spoken, wherever the English foot has trod, on the broad waves of the Pacific Ocean, in Turkish kiosks, in Indian jungles, among the palmy islands of the rude Atlantic, or on the summit of the blue Caucasian Mountains; yet that frail boy was the famous So-and-so, whose demise we have the pleasure of recording to-day in another column."

"Humph! Yes," said Tomlinson; "if it succeeds I think I can manage to do what we want."

"If!" ejaculated Jones. "If! We *will* succeed!"

"Just so, Jones. Your high-flown speech reminds me of that French fellow—ancient party connected with the Church—Richelieu, who said, 'There's no such word as fail.'"

"Precisely," returned Jones; "nothing could express my meaning clearer."

"Excuse me, Mr. Jones," broke in the Crochet, "but I cannot agree with the principles on which you intend to conduct this journal; believe me, I cannot lend my name to this venture—"

"Unless your own pet projects are carried out, Miss Crochet," interrupted Jones.

"Quite so!"

"Now, if you have any articles you pride yourself specially upon, say so, and they shall be inserted at an early date."

"Oh, really, Mr. Jones, you are very considerate. In that case, may I ask you to give prominence to my letters on 'House-keeping in the Middle Ages,' and the 'Women of the Remote Future.'"

"My dear Miss Crochet, they shall appear in our *first* numbers."

"Oh, thanks! a thousand thanks! In that case I withdraw my scruples, feeling certain the paper will be conducted on the most trustworthy principles."

"I think *my* name will be a sufficient guarantee for that, Miss Crochet," returned Jones. "Bobbets," he added, turning to me, "you must undertake the editorial department, look after the advertisements, and do the theatrical, musical, and banquets. Will that suit you?"

"Yes."

"Very well; I know a firm who'll be glad to do the printing on advantageous terms; and I've got a second floor in Fleet-street for the publishing. The selling price will of course be rd. Any dissentient? None! Carried *nem. con.* And now comes the momentous question, By what name shall we christen the little darling?"

"Ah! that's a poser," said I. "Suppose we call it 'The Post Meridian.'"

"Won't do!"

"'The Twilight Warbler,'" said Miss Crochet.

"Scarcely suggestive enough, my dear madam."

"'The Rushlight!'" cried Tomlinson.

"Don't talk like that, if you please, T., you hurt my feelings. Our paper must dazzle, not glimmer."

"What do you say to 'The Nocturnal News?'" asked Poddles.

"No; I don't fancy that. I have it—what do you think of 'The Evening Shocker?'" Those in favour of 'The Evening Shocker' will have the kindness to hold up their hands."

"All!"

"Carried *nem. con.*"

"Miss Crochet and gentlemen, I beg to propose 'Success to "The Evening Shocker."' Last of all, when do we commence? To-day's Tuesday. How will next Monday suit you?"

"Do you think we shall be ready in time?" I asked.

"Certainly! I have arranged everything. Bobbets, a word with you. Although you are to be editor, you must allow me to conduct the bantling for the first week."

"Just as you please, Jones; no one could manage it better."

And, after a few remarks, the meeting broke up.

Monday soon arrived. We had advertised the new-comer well; and an army of street boys was devoted to our interest, each of whom was to wear a printed slip—"The Evening Shocker"—in his cap. We had plenty of stuff for the first number. "The Women of the Remote Future" ran into four columns and a quarter. Tomlinson had surpassed himself in a leading article on "The Antediluvian Press; or, the Literature of the Ancients." Poddles and I had worked bravely, and Jones hadn't closed his eyes for three nights. About one o'clock, Jones came to me, half mad with delight, waving a broad sheet in his hand. It was the proof copy.

"Bobbets!" said he, "your hand, my boy! 'The Evening Shocker' is an accomplished fact. The printer is running it off now. What do you think of our first number?" folding it, as he spoke, to get at the middle. "Here we are:—

"'The Evening Shocker.' Fifteenth Edition! This Day's News! Latest Telegrams! Foreign Intelligence!

"'Paris, 1 P.M.—Bourse much agitated. Rentes lower, 50 cents. A terrible catastrophe is reported on the Seine; no time to send particulars.'

"'Madrid, 11 A.M.—Ministerial crisis. Advertisement in daily papers this morning headed, "Wanted, a respectable married man, without encumbrance, as King." Carlisle rising somewhere.'

"'Paris, 1.30 P.M.—Bourse still agitated. No catastrophe on the Seine; the whole affair a hoax by an insane man.'

"'New York, last evening.—Arrival of R.M.S. City of Chattanooga with mails; all well. Gold 159½, silver lower. Cotton: middling 35, upland brisk. Stocks, no demand. Petroleum, in bags, inclined to drop. Flour as usual, white 8 dols. Corn troublesome. Rum unsteady. The President was at Washington or somewhere else.'

"'Police. This Day.—Bow-street.—Desperate assault on the police by a boy six years old. Marlborough-street.—Knox on

door-knockers. Worship-street.—Disturbance in a chapel.'

"'House of Commons. This Day.—The Speaker took the chair at one o'clock. Sir Hugh Muffkins took the oaths and his seat for Little Bribington.'

"'Money Market.—Prices tending downwards. No business doing. Stock Exchange closed in consequence of a boat-race somewhere.'

"'Cricket. Lord's.—North-easters 7. South-westerns. North-easters having it all their own way: Gaffin 501 runs, left running.'

"'Here's Poddles's first attempt: 'Death in a plum-pie.' No time to read it now.

"'Court of Chancery.—Re Cosmopolitan Financial Corporation (limited). Smasher's case.'

"There! you see, my boy, plenty of original news."

"Plenty! I should think so. However did you obtain it all?"

"Never mind! Attention, if you please, to our great draw—shows well—big letters all over the sheet—

"'Impending COLLAPSE of the Zodiac Insurance Company. It was currently rumoured in City circles this afternoon that the Zodiac, one of the oldest insurance offices in the metropolis, was likely to suspend operations, in consequence of inability to meet its engagements.'"

"Jones! Jones!" I said; "you're treading on dangerous ground; why, the Zodiac is as safe as the Bank."

"Of course it is—safer! But it will sell the paper to-day, and we can apologize to-morrow."

"Do you think it will be all right?"

"Of course! Don't worry your head about that. At any rate, I mean to chance it," and he went off in a tiff.

At two o'clock we commenced issuing, and the demand exceeded the supply—the statement about the Zodiac causing the paper to be bought up rapidly. That afternoon our circulation reached 15,000 copies. Jones was in ecstasies; Poddles and Tomlinson bewildered. But I felt a secret uneasiness about the insurance company; so much so, that I could not help saying to Jones—

"I wish you'd let the Zodiac alone."

"Say another word about that affair, and

I retire from the concern; and then what will you do?" he replied.

"Let him alone, Bobbets! He knows what he's about," growled Poddles and Tomlinson.

The next day we printed a denial of the Zodiac affair, and Jones was inwardly chuckling over its success, and was meditating another *canard*; when—lo! and behold!—the following morning we received notice that the directors of the Zodiac had commenced an action against us for damages!

The first thing we did was to hunt up Jones.

"Here's a delightful mess you've got us into!" said Poddles. "What's to be done now?"

"I haven't the remotest idea," answered he. "It's a bad job altogether."

"A bad job! I should *rather* think it was a bad job!" I remarked.

"Ah! that's right—blame me! Of course, it's all my fault! You wanted to sell the paper, didn't you? And what was I to do? I never met with such a set of ungrateful curs in all my life!"

"Well, but what are *we* to do?"

"Fight it out!" said Jones; "and don't bother me."

The next day the Zodiac offered to withdraw the action if we would state the source from whence we obtained the rumour. This we were unable to do. The affair got wind. The morning and evening papers held us up to derision. Our printer struck; our boys rebelled; and we couldn't obtain an advertisement unless we inserted it for nothing. We started on the Monday, and on the Saturday morning one of the leading daily papers announced as follows:—

"Died, after a lingering existence of five days, the latest bantling of the world of letters, 'The Evening Shocker.' Although its life was a short it was not altogether a merry one, as no less than three actions for libel have already been commenced against its promoters. We trust we shall not be accused of evil feeling when we say we rejoice to learn that this miserable scandal has ceased to exist. It is only a matter of wonder to us that such a scurrilous, mischievous, and pestilent journal ever saw the light."

The company took us into court, and

obtained £5,000 damages. No—I am wrong. They never obtained them, for we levanted!

NATURAL HISTORY OF WASPS.—

PART I.

WASPS have, from the earliest times, been regarded as the personification of everything that is in a small way actively annoying and tormenting. Their well-known aggressive propensities were described by Homer some three thousand years ago. Classical readers will doubtless recollect how, in the twelfth book of the "Iliad," he makes Asius compare the Greeks to wasps guarding their nests:—

"Darkening the rock, while with unwearied wings
They strike th' assailants, and infix their stings;
A race determined, that to death contend,
So fierce these Greeks their last retreats defend."

Aristophanes, in his well-known comedy named after these insects, lashed the Dicasts who promoted strife and litigation among the Athenians and lived on the quarrels which they excited—under the guise of wasps, which he designated as the most irascible and peevish of all creatures.

During the long space that intervened between the times of Aristophanes and Shakspeare, the wasps did not improve in character. The works of our great dramatist contain numerous references, anything but complimentary, to these insects. "Waspish," and "wasp-tongued," are epithets that occur in several of the plays. For example, in "Julius Cæsar"—which everyone is supposed to know almost by heart in these days of competitive examination—there is the oft-quoted passage:—

"I'll use you for my laughter
When you are waspish."

Pope clearly thought no better of wasps than Shakspeare did, when he wrote these lines:—

"Much do I suffer, much, to keep in peace
This jealous, waspish, wrong-head, rhiming race."

But the ill-natured remarks of these writers are as nothing in comparison with the torrent of abusive eloquence which Christopher North pours forth on their devoted heads. The words are put into the mouth of the Ettrick Shepherd of the "Noctes Ambrosianæ," who, according to the late lamented Professor Ferrier, "in

wisdom equals the Socrates of Plato, while in humour he surpasses the Falstaff of Shakspeare." He begins by observing that "O' a' God's creturs, the wasp is the only ane that's eternally out o' temper; there's nae sic thing as pleasin' him;" and after describing a sunshine scene in a garden, with "the bonny birdies singing," "the bees at wark, and murmurin' in their gauzy flight;" and "a' the flees that keep dancin' in their burnished beauty, in millions upon millions, and yet a' harmoniously blending together in amity," proceeds as follows:—"Amid this general dance and minstrelsy, in comes a shower o' infuriate wasps, red hot, as if let out of a fiery furnace, picking quarrels wi' their ain shadows; then roun' and roun' the hair o' your head, bizzing against the drum o' your ear, dashing against the face o' you, who are wishin' ill to nae leevin' thing; and, although you are engaged out to dinner, stickin' a lang, poishoned stang in just beloe your ee, that afore you can run hame frae the garden, swells up to a fearsome hicht, making you on that side look like a blackamoor, and on the opposite white as death; sae intolerable is the agony from the tail of the yellow imp that, according to his bulk, is stronger far than the dragon o' the desert."

These long-maligned insects have at length—like "good Henry the Eighth," and other distinguished personages—found a rehabilitator—if we may use the word—in Dr. Ormerod, of Brighton; who, in an interesting little volume entitled "British Social Wasps," somewhat severely takes us—that is to say, the general public—to task for passing a hasty judgment on his *protégés*. "It is only those," he tells us, "who have learned to love wasps, as some naturalists love bees, who will be at the pains to understand them; who will watch by a nest, and learn from the movements of the insects what is going on inside; or will share their study window with a colony of wasps in active work" (p. 1). Further on, he tells us "that wasps, unlike bees, rarely if ever sting unless provoked" (p. 32): a statement that we should be glad to believe true if we could. "I speak as I find. Wasps never attack me if I leave them alone, or handle them with discretion" (p. 59). Dr. Ormerod is, we fear, somewhat inconstant in his loves. Although he does not definitely say so, he and his wasps are bosom friends during the spring and early summer; while later in the season, when

they are abundant on the fruit walls, and often "take up their quarters on the wrong side of our windows, or make more direct personal advances," he has "nothing to say on behalf of them: they are a nuisance, and a terror to all who have little children" (p. 245). So that, after all, Dr. Ormerod has, we think, failed in establishing more than a partial rehabilitation. Even in their most genial periods, Dr. Ormerod's "holiday companions" must be treated according to definite laws of etiquette. To cultivate the close acquaintance of these insects, we must proceed with a certain amount of caution. We are advised not to make our first call on "the wasps at home" on a windy day, or in a hot sun; and we must always carefully look out for crawling wasps—too weak to fly, but not too weak to sting—before taking up our post of observation. If we wish to preserve the nest as a memento of our call, we are advised to adopt the following costume:—"A pair of strong gloves are wanted, with short sleeves sewn to the tops, to tie round the arms, below the elbow. The trousers, composed of substantial fustian, should be tied over the ankles, to prevent crawling wasps gaining access that way. A wide-brimmed hat; a strong net veil, sewn together down the back, and the lower edge tucked carefully under the coat collar; and a handkerchief packed under the chin, make the armour complete." With these precautions any wasps' nest may be cut down from a tree, or dug out of a bank, without danger.

We cannot say that Dr. Ormerod has altogether succeeded in his attempt to change the general opinion regarding the character of wasps. He has, however, described their habits and manners with great accuracy; and it is mainly from his pages that we have gleaned the material for this article.

There can be no doubt that every animal has its own special duties to perform; but it seems presumptuous to assume that these duties have always a direct bearing on the well-being of man. There can, however, we think, be little doubt that the wasp family are of undoubted service to us in acting as scavengers, and removing rotten wood and garbage of all kinds, and in destroying flies, spiders, and caterpillars. A reward was offered some years ago for the destruction of the wasps' nests on the late Sir J. T. Brisbane's estate in Ayrshire; and the consequence was, that in two years' time

the place was infested with swarms of flies to an extent never before seen. Whether the wasps take part, like many allied insects, in the fertilization of flowers, is, we believe, not definitely known.

The wasps constitute a family of the large order of *Hymenoptera*,* or membranous winged insects. The following are the leading characters of the family:—

Wings four, naked, membranous; the posterior pair smaller than the anterior. Mouth with horny jaws, and a lower lip or tongue, sheathed by the maxillæ or lower jaws. Abdomen armed with an ovipositor, or sting in the females. The larva, or grub, vermiform. The pupa, or chrysalis, incomplete and inactive.

According as they possess an ovipositor or a sting, the insects of this order are divided into two great sections: the latter—to which wasps, in common with bees, ants, &c., belong—being called *Aculeata*, from their possessing a sting and poison gland, which will be presently described.

The wasps—if we use the term in its most general sense—are divided into the *Eumenidæ*,† or solitary wasps, and the *Vespidæ*, or social wasps. While, in bees and all other allied insects, the fore-wings are not folded in repose, the reverse is the case both in the solitary and the social wasps; and, by the simple character of the longitudinal foldings of the wings, the two kinds of wasps, although they differ materially in their habits and manners, are by many naturalists—including Dr. Ormerod—united in one family. The single fact of the *Eumenidæ* consisting merely of perfect males and females, while workers or imperfect females constitute the great majority of the social wasps, would seem to be enough to separate the solitary from the social wasps. The reader who wishes for further reasons will find them stated in pp. 398-406 of Blanchard's magnificently illustrated volume, entitled, "Metamorphoses, Mœurs, et Instincts des Insects."

It is to the social wasps that this paper is mainly devoted; and of the solitary wasps we will only remark that the most common occurring in this country belong to the genera *Odynurus*‡, and are small, dark-look-

ing wasps, having the abdomen (or body) spindle-shaped and marked with black and yellow in the strongest contrast—the black generally prevailing. As has been already observed, we find among these insects only perfect females and males, there being no workers. Both sexes appear at the same time, early in the season; the males being much smaller than the females. The mother wasp makes cells of sand or other material, agglutinated with mucus. She deposits an egg in each cell, and with it a store of small caterpillars as food for the larva when it shall be hatched. These caterpillars she stings so as to paralyze without positively killing them. When one cell is thus filled and provisioned, the mother seals it over, and goes on to prepare another in the same way, and so on till a sufficient number are constructed. In due time a larva or grub is produced from the egg; and having eaten the food provided for it, and having lined the walls of its cell with a smooth, silky web, it changes into a pupa or chrysalis, and sleeps through the winter.

These insects do not, like the social wasps, obtrude themselves unpleasantly on public notice; but they may readily be found—if looked for—in the neighbourhood of flowers. Their nests are to be met with in most unexpected and out of the way places, and are merely a collection of irregularly shaped cells, packed together without any apparent attempt at arrangement. Old window-frames are a favourite locality; but Dr. Ormerod has seen a nest inside the lock of a kitchen door, and another in the drawer of an old-fashioned looking-glass. Nests have also been found between the folds of a piece of paper which had fallen behind some books; on the tops of books; in the cavity of sticks from which the pith had been excavated, &c. The larder is always well provided. Mr. Sells has found twenty-five small caterpillars, and Mr. Saunders as many as seventy-five, in a single nest. Those insects which, from their being popularly mistaken for coloured flies, often escape the summary fate that would await them if their true position in society were recognized, seem to spend the greater part of their existence in destroying the caterpillars which infest our gardens; hence, especially considering their harmless nature, they deserve encouragement rather than extermination.

We now turn to the *Vespidæ*, or social

* Derived from the Greek word *ὑμῆν*, a membrane, and *πτερόν*, a wing.

† Derived from *εὐμενής*, well-wishing, or harmless.

‡ Derived from *ὀδυνηρός*, painful.

wasps, of which seven species, including the hornet, are found in this country. They are *Vespa crabro*, the hornet; *V. Britannica*, the British wasp; *V. sylvestris*, the wood wasp; *V. arborca*, the tree wasp (very rare); *V. Germanica*, the German wasp; *V. vulgaris*, the common wasp; and *V. rufa*, the red wasp. The last three build their nests underground, and hence are called ground wasps; while the others, from building in trees, or in the open air, are called tree wasps. The hornet is easily recognized by its colour, as well as by its size; the predominating hue being brown instead of black, and the markings being of an orange rather than of a gamboge yellow, which is the ordinary livery of the smaller species. The latter are nearly of the same size, except the common wasp, the workers of which are rather smaller than the others. They are, moreover, all nearly of the same colour, except that, in the British and red wasps, certain patches of orange are mixed with the regular black and yellow uniform. For the means of distinguishing with certainty one species from another, we must refer to Dr. Ormerod's chapter on "Classification;" and we will content ourselves with simply remarking that, in all the sexes of the three species of tree wasps, the scape, or, first joint of the antennæ—the handle, as it were, of the flail, to which antennæ of this form are often compared—is yellow in front. As a general rule, open to occasional exceptions, the colour of the scape indicates the habits of the wasps in relation to nest-making.

"Except in the different styles of architecture displayed in the construction of their nests, there is very little," says Dr. Ormerod, "in the habits of the smaller species to distinguish them from one another. *V. sylvestris* is the most powerful, and is said to have the sharpest sting; but *V. vulgaris* knows best how to use it. *V. rufa*—known by the red shading proceeding from a dark oval spot in the centre of the dorsal aspect of the first abdominal ring to the lateral spots on either side—is said to be particularly gentle, and to hold the place among wasps which the humble bee has among bees."

Of these species of *Vespa* the hornet only can be said to have a special history. The Bible contains references to wasps and hornets, which, from their aggressive habits, were made the instruments, under the Di-

vine will, of expelling the Amorites from the Promised Land (see Exod. xxiii., 28; Deut. vii., 20; Josh. xxiv., 12; and Wisd. xii., 8). The Rev. W. Bevan, in his article "Hornets," in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," inclines to the view that the hornets must be taken in a metaphorical sense, and not literally; but, as there are well-authenticated instances of armies having in earliest times been dispersed by these insects (see "Ælian," xi., 28; xvii., 35; and "Ammian. Marcellin.," xxiv., 8), we see no reason for adopting Mr. Bevan's view. Moreover, Dr. Tristram, in his "Natural History of the Bible," tells us that hornets are still abundant in Palestine. He describes four different kinds, and states that they are larger than our hornets. "Quiet when unprovoked, the fury of their attack, when they are disturbed, makes a hasty retreat the only preventive of a complete rout of the camp."

In India the doings of hornets are often very serious. A sugar store at Shahjehanpore was, some years ago, taken possession of by a swarm of these insects, which held it, in defiance of the Government, till the end of the season, by which time it was found that they had consumed nearly three thousand pounds of sugar. A picket of Lord Clyde's army were once amusing themselves by throwing stones at an odd-looking mass of mud and straw hanging on a tree. When, after a time, a stone was sent into the centre of the mass, out flew a cloud of hornets, which drove the aggressors into the adjacent river as their only place of safety. Many of our readers will, doubtless, recollect the sad fate of a party of engineers who, while carrying on a survey for a railway on the banks of the Jumna a few years ago, were attacked by hornets, which stung two of the surveyors to death, and severely injured several of them.

One of our most distinguished living entomologists, a late President of the Entomological Society, informs the writer of this article that he has no doubt that travellers in the East have been often driven from positions they had taken up by insects of the wasp tribe, that by some cause had been irritated; and that armies might be so much annoyed by a multitude of them as to be unable to hold certain positions. "I have seen," he observes, "a number of naturalists fairly driven out of a lane by a very few hornets, of which they vainly wished to

make a few captures. At G—s (in the South of England) we had thirty to forty nests of the common wasp in one corner of a field—say on a couple of acres of ground. If the insects in these nests had been annoyed by being trodden upon, I feel pretty sure no body of men could have held their position long on the ground.” The Indian hornets, like our wasps at home, attack man without any provocation.

Dr. King, of Penang, writes to Dr. Ormerod with regard to a species of hornet:—

“He”—Dr. King should have said *she*—“is very vicious, and we are in great fear of him. No later than last Sunday one flew into the Scotch kirk, when one of the merchants was reading the service, plumped down and stung him instantly on the head, and was off again in a moment. The sting drew blood, besides being exceedingly painful.”

THE REVEILLE.

HE who, from some rocky summit, watches o’er
the dusky deep,
For the coming of the day-god, rising from his rosy
sleep;
Sees the darkness slowly riven, and a line of silver-
gray
Glimmer—gleam—then change, and scatter all the
heav’ns with golden spray;
Sees the hidden verge of waters, murmur’ing ever
through the night,
Move around the dim horizon, one great arc of roll-
ing light;
While amid a blaze of ensigns, in the Orient far un-
furled,
Dazzling, comes the central sov’reign, sole sustainer
of the world;—
So hung round by Winter, weary, I have waited
through the Night,
And have seen the dead Earth tremble into music,
warmth, and light;
Seen the barren hawthorn ridges, brake and bram-
ble, bush and tree,
Braid the sunny lanes with verdure, skirt with living
green the lea;
Seen the furrows of the corn fields fring’d with
bands of emerald bloom;
In the harebell halls a splendour spread, cerulean,
through the gloom;
In the glen, the streamlet quiver into motion, into
light;
Orchards bountiful with blossom, meadows gar-
landed with white.
Fragrance rises from the woodlands, perfume floats
along the meads;
Far above, the lark sings high; the thrush a grate-
ful anthem leads.
From the sunny meadows, hark! the merry laugh
rings loud and clear;
Happy children, men, and maidens now the balmy
hillocks rear.

All the lanes are odour-laden; bowers of roses
blushing blow—
All the radiant Earth is redolent of summers long
ago.
For a voice awoke the heav’ns, and a footstep shook
the hills,
And the valleys felt the Presence in their thousand
upland rills.
Eyes of violet looked southward—waves of gold
were backward blown—
Rainbow robes descended lightly from an azure-
belted zone;
And she moved, imperial goddess—Spring—her
virgin triumphs won—
Like a bride to meet the bridegroom, she advanc’d
to meet the sun.

SOCIAL GRIEVANCES.—No. I.

A BIG DINNER.—PART II.

ON my way home, I was walking down
St. James’s-street, musing on the vanity
of the inhuman dishes I had tasted; and, as
I passed the door of my club, the Round
Table, I thought I would go in for a few
minutes, to take a slight refreshment. On
my opening the smoking-room door, I saw,
to my great astonishment, two of the guests
of the evening. It was curious enough, for
I had been a member of the club for more
than twelve years, and had never seen them
before. I could guess, from a certain re-
straint which manifested itself at my en-
trance, that they had been abusing the
entertainment of the evening. I said it
was strange we had not recognized one
another as members of the same club. They
agreed. I also took the initiative, and
began to abuse the dinner, and exclaim
against its badness and stupidity. They
agreed, as far as politeness permitted them.
I found them chatty, agreeable, and amus-
ing, and yet they had been the dullest of
the guests. They were good enough to
attribute their want of vivacity to the de-
pressing influence of the company. Per-
haps their return to freedom and indepen-
dence, combined with brandy and soda and
cigars, had something to do with their
change from grave to gay. We played two
or three rubbers of whist; and, certainly,
to that dreary dinner I am indebted for the
acquaintance of two remarkably agreeable
gentlemen.

But, after all, is it right that I should be
indebted to an after-accident for that? Why
should not these gentlemen, under a more
genial influence, have shown themselves in
their true colours? Whose business was it
to trot them out? Supposing we had only

been six or eight, and had sat down to a fried sole, a mutton chop, and roley-poley pudding, the dinner would have cost less, but we should have enjoyed it more.

In consequence of the rubbers, I did not get home till an early hour of the morning, which occasioned a few lively passages between my Lucy and myself; though I am free to confess that, having right on her side, her *copia verborum* was more extensive than mine. The morning—or rather, later in the morning—arranged matters satisfactorily, and I was enabled to look forward to our own little *tête-à-tête* dinner in the evening with equanimity.

At that little dinner—and oh! what a delightful contrast to the big affair of the night before—we discussed the reasons and possible remedies for this state of things. My Lucy was exceedingly severe on her own sex. She said that, as a general rule, the wives of the middle classes were idle, pretentious, conceited, useless, and *above their work*—this very much emphasized—because they would attempt to ape the manners of their betters, either in rank, in knowledge, in art, literature, science, or whatever their particular proclivity might be.

I quoted Mrs. Silicon, a woman who has a scientific turn of mind. She's a confounded humbug, of course, and knows no more of science than my Tom cat of algebra. But she attends lectures at the Royal Institution, picks up the slang of one particular branch, and corresponds with Professor Hartz on the forms of graphite and mineral charcoal. Hartz, who will do anything for a dinner, launched her on the sea of science; hence her rooms are always crowded on the nights of her *conversazioni* with white heads, and blue spectacles, and hideous women. A few microscopes about the tables, supplied with the limbs of various specimens of the *coloptera*, which she has possibly culled herself in Kensington-gardens that afternoon; photographs of somebody's telescope, or diving bell, or balloon, or what not, form her stock in trade; and the wretched woman, considering herself a *savante* on these very small pretences, has the impertinence to ask you or me to meet these big-wigs at dinner—not because she wishes to do us a civility, or to make us pass an agreeable evening, but to throw them at our heads, as it were, and say—

“See what superior people you meet

here! When I dine with you I meet the Browns, and Joneses, and the Robinsons—stupid, frivolous people, who would not care even to hear of the stupendous secrets these genii I gather round my table have surprised and given to the world.”

Have you not often met such an one, my friend, whose pretentious vanity, disclosing her crass ignorance, has amused and disgusted you? How can such an ill-bred humbug entertain with the ease and grace of my Lucy, for instance? And is it not edifying to watch how the husband enjoys himself at the head of the table? He would be unworthy of his proud position if he did not believe that his wife was the learned creature she tells him she is. Is she not always calling him a fool, because he honestly confesses that he does not understand or care for her senseless jargon? And see how he strokes his moustache with a vacant imbecility as Professor Bendigo kindly instructs him as to a new kind of quartz recently discovered by his exertions! He is not listening a bit, but thinking how much happier he would have been had he married Polly Smith, his tutor's daughter, than the flashy peony of dishonesty sitting opposite him.

“But, my dear, you are getting rather poetically forcible in your language, are you not?”

Because I abominate the whole business. What, does a woman like that suppose that I am such an ass as not to see through all her shams and hypocrisies? Does she suppose that the *savans*, artists, singers, or authors who come to her dinners—but who would not come if they were not good, and if a little business were not to be accomplished there—do not laugh at her most consumedly?

That wicked little wag, Jack Sprightly, was carrying on an artistic flirtation with the beautiful Mrs. Postiche, who has an immense soul for art; but, nevertheless, wouldn't know a Titian from a Millais if she saw them side by side. Jack, the scoundrel, gets more than his fair share of claret by his harmless passion; and Mr. Postiche himself, who has the most friendly relations with Bordeaux, doesn't like to see it disappear so fast. Well, Jack was calling there one day; and on being shown into what was literally Mrs. Postiche's den, where she received her lions, Jack found her apparently absorbed in a volume of Ruskin, which,

however, in her abstraction, she had forgotten to turn right side up. Jack took up the subject, conversed with her, made her gush; and in a few minutes discovered that she had not the slightest knowledge of what she had been pretending to read about. So he wrote down to a friend in Devonshire begging him to send up a good-sized lump of the red sandstone. Jack sent Mrs. Postiche a piece as big as a double-Gloucester, and a pretty note with it, stating that it had come to his knowledge that she was much interested in Mr. Ruskin and all his works, and that he thought he could not better repay her many kindnesses than by forwarding her one of the stones of Venice, which had been in his family's possession for many years. It was put under a glass case in the hall, and Mrs. P. frequently lectures on it to the uninitiated.

This is the sort of women who murder the sociability of the mahogany. Despite all their swagger and their show they are soon found out, laughed at, and avoided. No *recherché* dish can compensate for bad manners and ill-breeding.

A vulgar woman sitting at the bottom of her table will cause you more anxiety and pain in the course of a few hours than if you had a hundred shares in the Anglo-Alsatian Bank. Her squabbles with her husband across the table would be amusing, if they were not distressing to people of good breeding. She appreciates and appraises dishes that owe their birth to her own kitchen.

"'Ave some of that wolowong," said a great patroness of the fine arts to me; "it's none of your nasty messes, but made by our hown Hemma."

What a seductive temptation! It was the same lady who, while staying at Rome to collect such art-treasures as she could lay her hands on, gave a grand ball. During the whole evening she was running after the Principe Tortoni, with a bottle of champagne in one hand and a large tumbler in the other, crying out at the top of her voice, "Voolay voo boovay, Mong Pringse, voolay voo boovay?"

It may seem odd dwelling on this type of hostess; but the fact is that, though not at all uncommon, she has not been shown up as she ought to have been.

The art-world cannot reasonably abuse the woman to whom they are, at least occasionally, indebted for a dinner. Her

raison d'être is her strong desire to get into society. Neither her talents, nor her manners, nor even her dinners as mere displays of wealth, would induce any well-bred person to enter her salons. But very good people will go where they can meet clever and amusing companions, or even dull celebrities, as other good people go to Exeter Hall when a noble lord is in the chair, who, probably, would not go otherwise. Those who do go will, no doubt, be disappointed; because, as Mrs. Postiche has obtained her object, she merely wears a smile of triumph in her face the whole evening, and takes no further care for the comfort or amusement of her guests; and does not possess, even if she had the wish to make the evening agreeable, that ready tact which can conciliate or reconcile incongruous elements, and which is only to be found in the woman of the world—or the woman not of the world—who has the honest intention to make her house pleasant to those she invites to it.

And, therefore, I am constrained to say that, as a general rule, men's parties are more agreeable than those where the sexes are combined. To the former, you need never invite a disagreeable fellow; at the latter, the agreeable wife may have a clod for a mate, but you can't leave him out. What a blessing it would be if you could! Observe how my delicacy and natural politeness prevent my assuming that it may be the wife who is objectionable. Men are more simple in their tastes, and don't care for mere show.

One of the pleasantest dinners I ever remember was given by a good friend of mine—who is fortunate in having the best cook in London—at the Blue Posts, in Cork-street, when Hart was the landlord. The *ménu* was simply cod-fish and beef-steaks, with claret and old port, sent in from the host's cellars; but such wine! The guests—I forget whether we were eight or ten—were all in the highest rank of literature and art. It would not be fair to disclose the secrets of the mahogany, lest Mrs. Postiche should turn up her nose at great men partaking of such simple fare; but there is no harm in my stating that at the bottom of the table I first saw the lion head of Thackeray, and from that evening had frequent opportunities of appreciating his noble but child-like heart.

Now, I was then only a boy just emanci-

pated from Oxford, and might have, in my innocence of the world, proved a very efficient wet blanket on the evening, had I been—as, in my day, many young university men were—conceited and self-sufficient. But I plied my knife and fork with a modesty unallied to servility; and, gaining confidence with every glass, was enabled once or twice to place an anecdote *apropos*, which, to my great delight, had not reached my hearers. They then, like gentlemen of tact, did me the honour of drawing me out; and I had the satisfaction of knowing, before I went to bed, that I had been generally considered “a very pleasant young fellow.”

I only quote this now as a proof that even a gathering of strangers might be well made agreeable if they would only be at the pains to discover each other's good qualities.

Why should you come to the conclusion that your neighbour is not worth speaking to, because he, like you, is moodily crumbling his bread? Let us hope that the day is not far distant when a reformed society will endeavour to discover the good instead of the evil qualities in individuals, and give them credit accordingly. I have lived a good many years in the world now, and am convinced, if Mr. Suchanone spent £100,000 in charity, but dropped his h's, his name, like the Corsair's, would go down to posterity, “Linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes.”

Well, Lucy and I have settled it all now. It shall be penal to have more than eight people at table to what is called “dinner.” Any number above that shall be termed, as formerly, an “ordinary.” Then you will have the certainty of knowing how your hostess regards you.

In the other case, where you want to knock off a number of people you have no particular regard for, proceed as follows. Make up your mind, at the beginning of the season, what days you will entertain. Say, June 7th, 14th, 21st. Then advertise in the morning papers—there will be a column devoted to that purpose—somewhat in this fashion:—

“Mr. and Mrs. de Spooner”—with a small d, please—“will hold an Ordinary at 14, Hoggington-gardens, on June 7th, 14th, 21st, at half-past eight. Friends will please accept the intimation that they are not

expected to attend more than one. No dress.”

Now, observe the advantages that would accrue both to host and guest if my reform dinner was carried. The host and hostess sit down punctually at the hour named. There is no before-dinner bother in the drawing-room. As the guests arrive, they are shown into the dining-room, and sit down at once. You wait for nobody, nor would a dish once removed be allowed to be replaced. Your object is to get rid of them as soon as possible; and if they don't choose to be punctual, it is their look-out, and not yours. When the cloth is removed, I should allow half an hour for wine, and ten minutes for coffee. The mistress of the house will then rise, and bow to the company; who, ladies and all, will at once take their departure. You will have done the whole thing in two hours. The guest will be equally happy. He will get a decent dinner for nothing. If he is any day hard up, and has not wherewithal to pay for a repast at the club, he will cast his eye over the “Ordinary” column, and see which of his acquaintance holds one for that day. If he is tolerably early, he will have his choice of seats. It will not be considered at all bad taste if he places himself as far as possible from the host and hostess. It is as likely as not that they are stupid or disagreeable people that he does not care about. There will be no introductions, but everybody may talk who likes. The dinner will be served *à la Russe*, and no guest will be called upon to carve. Thus he is spared all trouble and annoyance; and I should not be at all surprised—and it is the only possible disadvantage I foresee in my plan—if a warmer feeling were engendered between host and guest. The pleasure of being able to enjoy their dinner without the usual so-called polite restrictions would have a favourable influence on their temper and digestion. But the host would have to guard against any tender feeling towards his guests. If he were once so weak as to yield to his better nature, and after dinner exclaim, in the warmth of his heart, “Charley, old fellow, come up-stairs, and have a weed,” he would be lost. It would be the beginning of a return to the old ways, too dreadful to contemplate.

There. For the benefit of an ungrateful world, I have spoken!

THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK IV.—CHAPTER VI.

RUE DE LA CROISADE, NUMBER 7.

“AND to-day all my work is completed.” As he said this the speaker looked approvingly at his manuscript, then took off his glasses, wiped them carefully with a little piece of chamois leather he carried in his waistcoat pocket, and put away the old-fashioned, broad-rimmed gold spectacles in their shagreen case. Then he placed them, with the well-worn bit of wash-leather on which he had rubbed them, in his pocket, and rose from the table at which he had been sitting.

“Good, mon ami. Well done—rien ne résiste à celui qui persévère.”

“Mon mauvais ouvrage est achevé.”

The “scribble” was a folio of goodly size, written in a neat, methodical character, and enclosed in stout leathern covers.

The scene of this conversation was the interior of a comfortable and homely-looking room in one of the uppermost flats of a house in Paris. The furniture was of such a description as would lead a visitor to infer that the room was a mixture of library, study, and living room, serving for all three purposes. Books there were in plenty, a desk, and writing materials, together with other evidence of the place being the habitation of a student. On the other hand, a few choice flowers in an old vase on the centre table, so tastefully arranged as to display their beauty to the best advantage—crimson roses, and some sprays of white blossoms contrasting well with their deep blood red hue—gave intimation of the refining presence and care of woman; while a well-darned stocking, with a needle and thread stuck in it, hanging from an old, high backed, carved, and velvet covered chair, was evidence of feminine industry. Yet no lady was to be seen in the room, but only the two men.

It was July, the sun was scorching in the day, and at night it was hardly cool before the daylight brought with it returning heat. It was evening, the sun was setting in a mighty flood of gold and purple glory, shining aslant on all the roofs of Paris. The air was close; there was no wind to make a

ripple on the water, or stir the leaves of the trees with refreshing rustle, suggestive of coolness and comfort. Without, in the streets, the people were sitting at their doors, too hot to do anything but drink iced sugar and water, smoke little cigarettes, and sigh for some cool retreat. Paris was half asleep, dreamy, fatigued. The very gendarmes seemed ready to sleep in their walks; trees, roads, parks, were scorched and burnt up with the fierce heat; and the sun, slowly sinking in the west, poured his last rays slanting over roof and steeple and tower, and streamed in through open windows looking westward toward his bed, as though reluctant to quit this hemisphere for the few hours that divide the beginning of the night from daybreak. And his rays streamed in through the open windows of the top flat of Number 7, Rue de la Croisade, flooding with a soft, golden light the books, the old chairs, the roses; and illumining the long white locks of Francis Lavelle, and making bright the shoe-buckles and brown garments of good Dr. Gasc. It was here, high up in a house in the Rue de la Croisade, situate in one of the least fashionable, and therefore least costly, quarters of the gay city, that the Doctor and Madam, attended by the faithful old Victor, had found a home after leaving Bartholomew-square.

Dr. Gasc's reverse of fortune had brought him little either of care or discomfort for himself. He had a happy philosophy that taught him to soar higher than the ills of life; and what would to many men of his age and habits have been almost a death-blow, was to him a trifle hardly mentioned or lamented, seemingly forgotten. But although this represented accurately his personal and selfish feeling in the matter—although he could willingly give up the country of his adoption, his old house, his habits of life, without regret at the stroke of unlucky fortune that had swept them away, he had felt deeply the blow that deprived his adopted son of the comforts and advantages of his easy pecuniary circumstances. He had regretted the discomfort that he inflicted upon his housekeeper and his old servant. But Madam Mc Ara had borne up bravely, and never given vent to repining or lamentation—at least, before the Doctor—and had even declared that, above all things, she had always desired to live in France; though, as Dr. Gasc innocently observed, he had never heard her say

so before. To old Victor, however, Paris was a real treat. Here he was at home; and his marketings, and bargainings, and economy in providing for the necessities of their little establishment were quite wonderful. He would sally forth in quest of supplies for the straitened garrison in the Rue de la Croisade—inspect, and bargain for, and cheapen every likely-looking chicken in the neighbouring market. At last, purchase the plumpest couple within the reach of his scanty means; reluctantly dole out the few franc pieces into the hand of the poulterer; carry his basket home; cook the Doctor's dinner to a marvel; and wait at table afterwards in his threadbare livery, with such quiet movements and attentiveness to all the Doctor's wants as only personal affection and devotion to his old master could inspire in the breast of the most faithful of valets, butlers, and servants of all-work.

Here Lavelle found his old friend and Madam, occupying a flat of some five or six rooms, when he visited Paris for a time; and in the Doctor's little household he found as warm and kindly a welcome as of old. Madam, with all her old habit of bustling and making a commotion on the slightest possible pretext, bestirred herself to find fitting accommodation for her quondam father confessor and spiritual director; turning the Doctor's little establishment upside down almost, in her eagerness to provide for the earthly comfort of the Jesuit. Dr. Gasc was glad of Lavelle's society, and of the opportunity his presence in the family afforded for going over the old ground together; throwing themselves back into the old times, and talking the politics and philosophy and solving the problems of forty years before. And Lavelle had no scruple or hesitation about accepting the Doctor's hospitality and offer of a home during his stay in Paris. He knew his friend's means better almost than the Doctor did himself; and he knew, and had often assured Erle in his letters, that Dr. Gasc had still enough for all his simple wants—and something to spare. And added, further, that he knew the Doctor was saving and hoarding with a view to making some sort of provision for Reginald.

Thus affairs stood on the hot night in July when the Doctor announced to Lavelle the completion of his work—the contribution of years of study and research to his favourite science. And the book was

to see the light of print under the care of a well-known scientific publisher in the Rue de Lyons. From its publication the Doctor expected little, if any profit, and certainly cared not one jot for any fame it might bring him. If the lamp he had lighted threw any light upon the path of those who trod in the same steps towards truth, his aim and object were accomplished. Father Francis had just returned from one of his missions, and had seated himself in a chair near the Doctor.

"And to-day all my work is completed," said Dr. Gasc, as Lavelle took his seat in the old arm-chair always reserved for him.

Madam had made some tea in the room appropriated by her as a housekeeper's room, and old Victor brought the tea-pot in on a tray, with wafer biscuits, and rolls and butter.

"Poof—messieurs!" he exclaimed, as he put down his tray on the table. "Ma foi, but this is hot," grinning, as he stood at a respectful distance behind the Doctor, and showing his yellow teeth. "We shall not want the baker long; nature will do our baking for us. Eh, messieurs?"

"Leave the door open, Victor," said his master.

Father Francis and the Doctor sat and sipped their tea.

"The last sheet of my book is done," said Dr. Gasc, glancing affectionately in the direction of his manuscript. "My scribbling is now ended—for life, very likely!"

"It has been a labour of years," said the Jesuit.

"And a labour of love," replied the Doctor, his face lighting up with modest enthusiasm. "And how small is the result! how little of real progress has been made! Instead of dealing—as I once meant to do—with the whole science, I have written but a memoir, and that a bad and faulty one."

The wily Father paid his old friend some compliments, intended by him to be very flattering and grateful. But the Doctor only laughed his grim sceptical laugh, when the Jesuit began to preach him a sermon about the infinite littleness of all mundane things.

"Achille!" said the Jesuit, with his grandest ecclesiastical flourish of his hands, which were large, and soft, and white. "Achille! dear old friend of my heart, your secular labour is concluded. Think now of

other—higher things. Prepare yourself for the end that comes soon for us both.”

Again Dr. Gasc laughed with good-natured and kindly, though sadly sceptical, laughter at the warning of the churchman.

“Amen!” said a voice that penetrated through the open door—a soft voice that, as it pronounced this amen, displayed its foreign accent. “Amen!”—not to the laugh of the arch-doubter, her master, but to the confessor’s prayer—exclaimed good Madam McAra. She often prayed for her master, and not without reason.

“But, my good friend,” said Dr. Gasc to Lavelle, “I do not observe that saintly unworldliness in your own life I expect to see!”

“How, and in what way am I to blame, my dear Achille? Correct me, and spare not the lash, for in this is friendship’s essence,” said Father Francis, with a very unusual and sanctimonious expression of face, baring his back for the stroke of the flagellant.

“Nay, nay, Francis,” said the Doctor, shrugging his broad shoulders in foreign fashion. “Heaven forbid that I should turn preacher, and take your proper office from you.”

“But at least tell me what you mean,” returned the priest, “or how am I to amend my ways?—which are erring ever from the path of light,” he continued, heaving a sigh.

“Your visit to Paris was not purely on spiritual affairs. You had some worldly business here.”

“Ah!” exclaimed the Jesuit, with a still deeper sigh. “Paris is not what Paris was. The people have lost their fire. They are inert and sluggish now; nothing has any chance of success. I have no patience with them.”

“Think, my dear friend, of higher things than liberties, revolutions, and intrigues,” said Dr. Gasc, slyly.

But Lavelle took no notice of the interruption. He proceeded—

“There are too many papers by more than half—hot words, harmless threats, promises never performed and never intended to be. A muster on the Boulevards, a crowd, a show, an omnibus or two overturned for a barricade, a pistol loaded with a blank cartridge fired by some bolder spirit than the rest—bah! Achille!”

Here the Father rose, and, striking a military attitude, looked more the soldier than

the priest: his fine figure drawn up to its full height, and his head nearly reaching to the ceiling. “This is not the Paris of our days—all is changed now.”

“*They* have changed all that,” said Dr. Gasc, significantly pointing over his shoulder in the direction of the Tuileries.

“Now,” said Lavelle, “it is all talk and no action.”

“There was talk enough, and to spare, in the old days, it must be admitted.”

“Yes; too much,” said Lavelle; “but it had significance and meaning. Deliberations led to actions then. Paris was different—the people could be depended upon; but now—ah! I have no patience with them.”

“I am satisfied—they are satisfied,” said Dr. Gasc, calmly. “Let us have no more strife and bloodshed. The people of France enjoy more liberty under an imperial *régime*—tolerably despotic on paper, but in which the laws are liberally interpreted and justice impartially administered, and in which the hand of the law is recognized and feared—than they possibly could under any of your grand paper constitutions, with liberty, equality, and fraternity for a basis; but with no safety, no just administration of the laws, no sense of security and continuance. Let us have no more terrorism.”

To this speech of the Doctor’s, the Jesuit replied in his own peculiar strain, warmly advocating the political systems promulgated by his patriotic friends and colleagues. To his argument Dr. Gasc made no reply, but let him have—as indeed he often did—the last word in the discussion.

“The work you had determined upon completing is now finished,” said Lavelle, after a pause. “You have made an end of your writing; and, also, you have arranged your affairs as well as the unfortunate circumstances permitted.”

“I have,” replied the Doctor. “After the loss I had suffered, I came here, as you know, with Madam and Victor; for my house in London I readily found a tenant, and we settled here. As a man grows old, the objects of his life are narrowed into a smaller and smaller compass—”

“Till they centre in one!” broke out the Father.

“Precisely,” Dr. Gasc continued. “Mine have not yet done that. I had two principal objects ever in view. And in these I had about an equal interest. One was, to

finish my scribbling on the science I have worked for during so many years."

"And, my friend, with such good results for science—but for yourself, for your own eternal—"

"About that, presently," said the Doctor, with ever so little impatience perceptible in his manner. "You have seen me finish the revision of my work this evening. That is now completed, and off my mind."

"It is," assented Lavelle.

"For the other business I had to transact in Paris, I cannot say so much."

"I thought last night you told me you had settled all the affair with the bank to your satisfaction."

"If getting back one-tenth of the money you give be satisfactory," replied the Doctor, with a smile, "then that business may be said to have been satisfactorily settled."

"You have now all you can ever hope to get—in fact, all you are legally, though not all you are justly, entitled to."

"Just so," said Dr. Gasc; "that is the exact difference and distinction there is to be drawn between the two rights. I have now got back from the persons who have been entrusted with the settlement of the Descamps' affairs all I can claim or ever hope to get."

"And the estate is now disposed of?"

"Yes; it has been divided among the creditors, in greater or less proportions, according to their capital sums at stake."

"I wish," said Lavelle, fervently, "you had removed your fortune from their house to other and more secure hands, as we more than once urged you to do."

"I, too, wish I had; but what was to be has happened, according to the creed of you fatalists; and I still am happy, and not, thank God, a beggar."

The Jesuit rocked to and fro uneasily in his chair. Presently the Doctor resumed.

"I had then a wish—for a—a—"

"Philosopher," Lavelle suggested.

"Well, philosopher, if you will," the Doctor continued, smiling at his friend's remark. "A wish—a passion to save something—to hoard a little, ever so little, for Reginald—for Madam's old age, if I die before her and Victor. They have been good and faithful servants, and they deserve their reward. I desired to live on a crust of bread and garlic, to save for him. But how little I can do for him! how little I have done!"

"But he, Reginald—your son by adoption—feels less than you do your loss. He is young, strong, hopeful, as we were ourselves when we had life before us. We know not what future—how bright, how successful a career—may lie before him."

The Doctor rose from his chair, touched the spring of a hand-bell that stood on his desk. Instantly old Victor made his appearance.

"Light the lamp," said his master. For twilight had shaded by gradual steps into night.

With his hands behind his back in his old way, and with stooping gait, the Doctor walked slowly up and down the room.

"I have," he said, after taking a few turns, "thought over the matter we talked of last night when you read me Reginald's letter. I will tell you all I know. I am under no promise of secrecy—"

"To me you may tell anything—before my profession all secrets are poured out. From us nothing need be hidden. No promise needs be kept."

"Of this, as you well know, Francis, I hold other views to yours. But what I now tell you, I tell you as one friend to another. I break no promise, violate no oath of secrecy, do no man wrong. You recollect when we were boys together, and long before you had begun to separate yourself from the rest of the world—in fact, before you were a student of divinity or I of physic; when I lived at the Château Gasc, on the hill above the town, with my father and my brothers and sisters."

"And I," said Lavelle, interrupting Dr. Gasc in his narrative, as the flood of early recollections rushed upon his memory—"I lived with my dear, good, pious old mother, in the quaint little town of Amours. Had it not been for her, Achille—for her lessons of piety, her life, her memory—I should, very likely, have taken the field as you did."

"It might have been so; we thought alike then, Francis—had the same hopes, wishes, pursuits, desires. We never quarrelled but once—only once," said the good Doctor, tapping his forehead with his long, thin fingers. Then he proceeded. "You remember old André, our schoolmaster, the old red brick house by the bridge, Madame André in her snowy cap and apron; our walks together to and from the school; the turning on the road that led up the hill to the Château, where every morning we met,

and every evening we parted. I can see us again, two boys, merrily wishing each other 'good bye' and 'good night' at that turn, Francis, and heedless of all the cares before us. On our holidays playing at soldiers—you led one party, I the other—skirmishing and manœuvring, and storming the old well over the spring that trickled from the rock on the hill. And, as I said, we quarrelled but once."

"About pretty, rosy cheeked Marie André," said Lavelle, almost blushing at the recollection of his first and only love. "Oh, those early Gascon days!"

"I wish they were before us again," said the Doctor; "you should never turn priest a second time."

"Nor you go off to Spain soldiering," said Lavelle, playfully.

"No; we are wiser now. I would give all my life to those pursuits and studies that have made life pleasant."

"And I would do as I have done," said the Father, solemnly—"give my devotion to the Church."

"As I said," continued Dr. Gasc, "we had but one quarrel during our long companionship."

"It was about whom Marie André liked better of the two."

"It was. We nearly had a fight about it at the turn of the road one half-holiday, when I had taken a flower from her hand."

"And I believe then I should have been too strong for you."

"I question it, my friend," said the old philosopher, firing up. "However, Marie's hand was for neither of us; we left for Paris to finish our education. You entered the priesthood, I became a soldier. Marie André married the man she loved, against her parents' wishes—an Englishman. In Paris she found a home with her husband, who gave lessons in fencing, and had a great repute as a master of his art."

"I know she married and came to Paris," said Lavelle. "Then?"

"She had one child, a daughter—no other children were born—and Marie Erle was her parents' only child. The breach between Marie and the André was never healed. They cast her off. Her husband lost his health. A sickly and delicate man he became. I helped them—a little," said the Doctor, modestly. "Then I lost sight of them, when I was myself exiled from France. One night I was sent for to Wil-

derness-row—you know it—near Bartholomew-square. A patient required help, and had asked for me. That was Marie André's child, and Reginald Erle is Marie André's grandson. I did not know it then—I have learned it since. Does that help you to answer the question Reginald asks of you, and give him the aid he needs?"

"I begin to see light," said the Jesuit.

"You know his history after that;—how I, childless and unloved, took him to my home from the house of the good woman who had nursed his dead mother; how I loved the little stranger; how I loved him with a tenfold affection when I found that he was Marie's daughter's child."

"I do know," said Lavelle. "Now tell me your secret—tell me what I do not know. Who was the man who brought Reginald's mother to Mrs. Grafton's house? Who was the man who called at intervals on you in Bartholomew-square, to make inquiries about the boy? Give me his name."

"Robert Mortimer—a man of good family, a member of Parliament, a gentleman—and," said the Doctor, slowly, his face clouding over, "a bad man. Does that help you to help the boy?" he asked, watching the keen eye of the priest as the rays of the lamp fell on his face.

"I begin to see light," replied the Jesuit.

Some moments elapsed before either of the two friends broke the silence again. After a time, during which he had been apparently absorbed in deep thought, Lavelle said, half aloud, half in whisper to himself—

"Mr. Robert Mortimer."

"Aye!" answered the Doctor, with wrath in his tone—"Mr. Robert Mortimer. Now, about the pictures and the initials. Now, after what I have related to you before of what he said to me when he honoured me with visits—and with Reginald in his brother's household—have you any doubts?"

"I have doubts," returned the Jesuit, slowly and thoughtfully. "I have doubts and hopes, for I begin to see the light."

"God help you to help him; but I see no loophole for the foothold of Hope!" the Doctor gasped.

TABLE TALK.

THERE HAS BEEN a church restoration lately which may be fitly noted in "Table Talk;" for it was the church of "holy" George Herbert, poet and country parson,

and its fabric had scarcely been touched since the day when he himself "restored" it in 1628. When his hopes of Court preferment were at an end, George Herbert entered into holy orders; and, in 1626, was collated to the vicarage of Leighton Bromeswold, Huntingdonshire, to which living was attached a prebend in Lincoln. George Herbert held Leighton for three years, and then removed to Bemerton Rectory, Wiltshire, where he lived for the next six years that formed the span of his short-lived life. It will be remembered that the Rev. W. Lisle Bowles, poet and sonneteer, was also rector of Bemerton. Izaak Walton says of George Herbert, "he had probably never done duty regularly at Layton Ecclesia"—which is another name for Leighton Bromeswold. Whatever duty he may have done there, it is very evident that he cared for the church, for he restored it in 1628; and the Cotton manuscript says, "The church is, for the workmanship, a costly Mosaic; in form, an exact cross." (Conington Castle, the residence of Sir R. B. Cotton, is about seven miles from Leighton.) The chancel was plain Early-English, with three-light windows; and a four-light, Perpendicular, in the east wall. The transepts were Early-English, with good four-light Decorated windows on the east sides, and three-light Perpendicular windows at the ends. The south porch was fine Early-English, with shafts, moulded capitals, and good arched mouldings, with toothed ornaments. The north porch was plain Early Decorated. There was an excellent double piscina, Early-English. Oak open seats, with carved finials, were in the nave and chancel; though many of these had, during the past century, been removed for tall square pews. The roofs were of oak. The tower of the church bears the date 1634, and was designed by Inigo Jones. It may be sufficient to say of it, that it is not of any known ecclesiological style. But, altogether, the church of Leighton Bromeswold was a monument of the duteous care of George Herbert. Two centuries, however, had done much for its dilapidation, and it became necessary to make many repairs. Mr. Christian, the celebrated architect, was consulted; and the work has been carried out according to his plans. His design has been to restore the church to the condition in which it was left by George Herbert; and it was reopened, with special services,

on June 10. Very near to the church is a large square building, with a tower at each angle, and a lofty gateway through the centre of the structure. This was built, in the reign of James I., by Sir Gervase Clifton, who died before the building was completed. According to popular report, it is merely the gatehouse of the intended mansion or castle; but, if so, it is a grand one. I have now before me a sketch of it—and also of the church and the double piscina—which I made, in 1852, in company with Mr. E. R. Cooke, the distinguished artist, who also sketched this building at the same time. I am not aware if his sketch of it has ever been exhibited. The house is surrounded by a deep moat, over which is a bridge, leading to the gateway; and, with the water and trees, the whole made a very good subject for a picture.

IN ONE OF THE EASTERN COUNTIES resides a rector, in receipt of considerable emolument for the care of an inconsiderable number of souls. A widower, without encumbrance at home, with the parish greatly occupied with its agricultural pursuits, time passes heavily, and amusement is greedily sought. A wandering May fly suggests that time and fish may be killed together; and thereupon a letter is penned to the Right Hon. E., for permission to try a cast on the reputed trout stream. The courtesy and business habits of My Lord return, by next post, a card for two days' angling; and the reverend Piscator immediately sets out. He presents his card to the guardian of the waters, who follows the occupation of a miller, and is of the average class of yeomen; and our rector kills his 23 lbs. of excellent trout in this his first day. No doubt, the excellence of the taste and sport excited our friend so, that, after an interval of some few days, he again resolves to use his second day's permit. But, alas! some trifling parochial duty prevents his arriving at the waters before four p.m. Success this time is meagre, and a fitful shower suggests the propriety of seeking the hospitality of a neighbouring hotel for the night; and there, while enjoying the usual repast of eggs and bacon, the thought arises that, by getting up early, our friend might thus remunerate himself for his bad luck on this his second day. The morning opens with alternate heavy clouds and bright azure. A stirring breeze plays over the water, and the fish

rise "sweetly." One, two, are soon landed. But now appears the sturdy miller, walking fast; and, with his Eastern dialect, abruptly asks—"Hallo! yew 'ere again?" "Certainly," replies our friend. "But yeur ticket is for few days only." "Well, so it is." "And yew were here last week and yestre'en!" "Truly. But do you read your Bible?" "Yes." "Then I am afraid with little purpose, or you would have learnt in its earliest page, 'That the evening and the morning were the second day!'" What could the guardian say? He moved off; reverend Piscator caught his fish; and I found them none the less excellent from the scriptural interpretation put upon "the permit to fish."

A CORRESPONDENT: Allow me to add a few more examples to those cited in your article "Notes on Imitation and Plagiarism," p. 280. The quotations as to the "babies in the eyes" may be increased by another couplet—I think from Moore:—

"Thus, in our looks, some procreation lies,
We each make babies in each other's eyes."

The simile in Withers' and Younge's poems as to the rising sun being a "rude drunkard" is repeated in the song—

"The jolly old sun, where goes he at night,
And what does he do when he's out of sight—
Insinuations scoring?
We don't mean to say that he tipples apace,
We only know he's a very red face
When he gets up in the morning!"

The writer of your article suggests that, in the simile of the "babies in the eyes," Herrick may have borrowed a thought from Ben. Jonson. He would appear to have done so in the lines beginning, "A sweet disorder in the dress," which are so similar—in idea, at least—to those in Ben Jonson's "Silent Woman," commencing, "Still to be neat, still to be drest." And Herrick, in his beautiful song, "To the virgins, to make much of their time," beginning with the well-known verse—

"Gather the rose-buds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying!"

must certainly have had in his memory these lines in Spenser's "Faerie Queene"—

"Gather, therefore, the rose while yet in prime,
For soon comes age that will her pride deflower;
Gather the rose of love, while yet in time,
While loving thou may'st loved be with equal crime."

On the other hand, Herrick was pilfered of his idea—

"Cherry ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones—come and buy"—

(a song which Nell Gwynne loved to sing) by a modern poet, in the year 1825, whose verses—being set to music by Mr. Charles Horn—were sung throughout the country. Though, after all, Herrick had himself appropriated the simile from the song, "There is a garden in her face," by Richard Allison, published in "An Houre's Recreation in Musicke" (1606), each of the three verses of which song ends with the line—

"Till cherry ripe themselves do cry."

I must leave other examples for a future opportunity.

SOME TWO OR THREE YEARS AGO—it was after reading Colenso—I was bitten by the arithmetical mania, and made several experiments of an interesting but quite useless nature. Among other discoveries, I ascertained the time, within six weeks, of the death of Methuselah. That patriarch died in the year of the world 1656, *the very year of the flood*. Unless, therefore—which is too dreadful to be believed—he was actually drowned in the Deluge, he must have died in the first week of the year; for Noah went into the ark on the seventeenth day of the second month, being then a middle-aged man of 600, doubtless just beginning to be flecked with gray. His father, Lamech, cut off prematurely at the age of 777, died five years before the flood. Jubal, recently sung by George Eliot, belonged to the same generation as Methuselah. His sister, Naamah, is said by tradition to have espoused Ham; in which case, supposing the lives of the two branches of the family to have been of about equal duration, she would be an elderly lady of some 900 years at the time of her espousals.

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CHAPTER XXXV.



BENBOW waited for many days in expectation of receiving an answer to his letter. Then one came. He seized it, and with trembling hands tore open the envelope. As his eyes glanced over the contents

of the note, an expression of relief overspread his countenance. He read—

“I must take time to consider your proposal.”

“I knew it!” he called out, in triumph. “Every woman, as well as every man, has her price. After all, she is a low, common, earthy creature; and I gave her credit for more purpose than that. Money is the touchstone after all.”

There now came back on him the old puzzle: What was the secret of her animosity? But this helped to explain it: it was a low attempt to extort money. This solution—and it *would* be the solution, as sure as the sun would rise—took away all necessity for his being uneasy about his son

and daughter. He completely changed his plans. Instead of going up to London to be near them, he would let things take their course. Once she was out of the country, all would go well. He would have, at least, breathing time; and, in a year or two, would have some elaborate and effective plan arranged, which would effectively check all her schemes. He had worked through many a difficulty before now, and emerged triumphantly—even in cases more desperate than this.

In which mood he went about his usual business. That night he slept a sweet and refreshing sleep—such as criminals might for whom news of a reprieve had arrived—though he trembled to think how near he had been to destruction.

Lady Rosa and her husband were now fairly established in their London house; and young Mr. Benbow, M.P., was just recovering from the illness which prevented his visiting at his father-in-law's. Her acquaintances and friends had often pronounced that lady “very strange” and determined in “her ways.” Her husband was fast recovering, and was now able to attend to his duties in the House. But one curious thought seemed to hold her mind—some slight or degradation that she had received from his father. She waited patiently until he was quite restored to health, and then spoke after a fashion that quite astonished everyone who had assumed that she was the conventional “walking lady” of the fashionable drama. Often, as Mr. Charles Benbow lay sick, he wondered to hear her walking up and down in some adjoining room, talking to herself; and, also, was surprised at her frown and steady look. While he was thus indisposed, friends came to call; and among others, Mr. Pelly, a young Q.C.—a quick, thoughtful, ready fellow, “one of the rising men of the day”—that is to say, one of those who never ac-

tually rise. For the men who have risen are never spoken of as "rising." Mr. Pelly was an agreeable compound of law and gallantry. In an ingenious way he contrived to accommodate a very respectable practice to an unceasing adoration of those whose names, like the great family of tea-pots, pumps, tugs, &c., have, in vulgar phrase, *handles* to their names. Neither had he that semi-mouldy apparel to which the profession is so partial; but he dressed in a gay and quite fashionable style. Neither business, nor term, nor circuit, nor any of the excuses which so reasonably interfere with appointments in the case of a professional man, seemed to have any effect in interfering with his visits and parties. He was a man of abundant leisure, as it appeared; and, when Lady Rosa and her husband were known to have taken a house in town, Mr. Pelly, Q.C., who knew her family, was the first to call—about two o'clock, when everyone knew the Court of Chancery was sitting.

He had a very close and confidential air; and almost at once was struck by the thoughtful, disturbed air about Lady Rosa. He thought, probably, he would have liked to have had her in his witness-box to interrogate her. But he would have done it very politely. Besides, here she was in the drawing-room, sitting before him, where he could do so skilfully enough and without trouble.

Mr. Pelly had been in a vast number of what are called "sensational" or dramatic cases—which, in truth, mean a great deal of histrionic effort for the counsel, judges, and witnesses engaged, but little satisfaction to the litigants. Nothing entails such genuine interest as dramas of this description. There is more general publicity attends such advocacy, and the incidents of such advocacy, than any amount of speechifying in the House of Commons.

Mr. Pelly was a ladies' man, too, and was fond of paying visits to the Lady Marys and Lady Rosas of society. With them—elegantly dressed, curled, and oiled, and white-vested—he would sit, take his tea, and tell them the general news. And now this shrewd counsellor came to call on Lady Rosa Benbow. He found her at home, but very absent and *distracted*. But, when he came to a certain subject, she became attentive.

"By the way, have you seen Mr. Benbow of late? I met a man who was at the

Duke's with him, and he said Benbow went on in the strangest way. People there thought he was a little touched. Then there was an actress there—"

"Yes; that woman—she should never have been let into the house. I don't know what was over my father. Though he almost went on his knees to get her asked."

"You don't say so! How very mysterious!"

"I could not tell half the strange things in connection. But we shall have them all cleared up—I am determined on that—the moment Charles is able to go out. Another part of the proceeding was their keeping us away after we had agreed to go. But I would have gone down myself, only for Charles."

"It might make a romance. Depend upon it, it is some secret—some old questionable bit of work, done fifty years ago—and which this woman has knowledge of. It often happens in successful families. They talk of that familiar skeleton in the cupboard; but that is hardly the description. No prudent people would keep such a thing; they would have the old bones thrown out, or got rid of in some way. No, it is more that Sword of Damocles swinging away over a man's head, even at the great State dinners—as the waiters call them—when he dines out."

It was amazing how this idea of the Sword always arose in everyone's mind in distant connection with the unhappy hero of this narrative. Indeed, in his face seemed to be written the whole story of that Sword and its fatal motion. Or was it that its shadow seemed to be slowly and fitfully cast across it every now and again—some uneasy and nervous twitch which betrayed his inward thoughts?

"It is very odd," went on the barrister, "the number of men, of even distinguished families, who have some such secret involved. It comes out before us in the profession. I have rather a fancy for getting on the track of such cases. The attorneys know my taste, and often come to me."

Lady Rosa started.

"You might help me in this, Mr. Pelly. Tell me what you think of it—how to go about and discover the truth, which I would give the world to do. If you only knew how it is worrying me and worrying him, who thinks all is much worse than it appears

to be. He thinks of his family. And really, Mr. Pelly, I get nervous when the strange disclosures in families you speak of occur to me. What would you say was the solution?"

"I could not tell," he said, "without the facts being regularly briefed to me. But you can do that, Lady Rosa; and it will be the first time I have been instructed by so agreeable an attorney."

When she had told him all, he thought for a little while, then said—

"The way to begin, as it seems to me, would be to find out about that woman—the actress: meet her, speak with her, and she will probably let out some clue."

"But where?—how?" she answered.

"Oh, if that is all, I can manage that; nay, I dare say could contrive to bring her to London, if not to you. You will see it does not require much detective genius; for I know Dubster and Doestone, and Northern the actor, and am graciously taken behind the scenes. They have agents in all directions. And who is she? what is her name?"

"Effingham. But I don't wish this to be known—to Charles particularly; or, indeed, that an actress is to be mentioned at all. I should not like his father to be degraded in his eyes."

Lady readers may guess the reason of this caution. She recalled the old *tendresse*—or what seemed a *tendresse*—and thought that prudence might now leave that old folly untouched.

"Yes," he went on, as he rose to go, "there lies the secret, depend upon it. You recollect the old police question, 'Who is she?' But I shall make all the inquiries necessary, and in a day or two shall come to report progress to you."

So saying, the agreeable barrister, who thus combined practices of two sorts, took his leave. Lady Rosa remained looking scornfully in the glass.

"It all comes," she said to herself, "from this alliance, which my father *would* bring about—money and rank! I love Charles; but I always suspected that father of his. No man gets to wealth and power from a low station without some mean and tortuous actions. No matter. He may do what he pleases about himself, but he shall not drag us down. We have nothing to do with him. And if he dares to bring disgrace on us, on his own—his own head let it be."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MR. PELLY, Q.C., had not over-stated his theatrical interest. He often found his way behind the scenes, and knew those managers—Dubster and Doestone—intimately; had them to dinner, and was friendly with the captains and lieutenants. He at once repaired to Dubster, found him at home, and opened his business.

"To be sure," said that artist, "I have heard of her. She is certain to be in town here before long. Some of the 'Promoters,' as I call them, are after her already. I mean those fellows who take a theatre as a speculation. But Froggatt will tell you all about her."

"Now, who is Froggatt?"

"Oh, Froggatt is an agent; scours all England for 'talent;' hires all the players right and left. Very clever fellow, Froggatt."

Mr. Pelly went straight to Mr. Froggatt, who, to his surprise, addressed him by his name.

"I remember you perfectly, sir. I was cross-examined by you in the case of the English Garrick *v.* Murray, the manager. You got a verdict for the Garrick, but he has never done anything since, except in the quart pot direction. I always said there never was anything in him."

"Except what he got out of the quart pot," said Mr. Pelly, smiling.

He then sat down and opened his case.

"How curious," said the agent. "My dear sir, why I have that very matter in hand now. Wallace, the manager of the Pantheon, is anxious to bring her to town; and I went down to see her. A splendid creature—certain to draw—great stage gifts."

"Oh, you saw her act?"

"No, I can't say that I did. But she will fill. Fine face and figure over the foot-lights! But very hard to deal with: takes airs rather; wants people to go on their knees to her. However, all in good time—all in our own time. But what can I do for you, Mr. Pelly, in that direction? You don't want to engage her? Not turning manager, like so many gentlemen now?"

"No; it is quite an unprofessional business altogether, I assure you. I merely want her address for some friends."

"Well, she will be in town in a few days, and I shall send it to you then."

Mr. Pelly departed and went to court.

The "few days" went by, and he received

a despatch from the agent, telling him it was in Craven-street, Strand.

With some curiosity, he repaired there; for he was rather anxious to see this heroine who was causing so much trouble in a noble family. He had some difficulty in obtaining entrance; and, when he saw her, started at the fine figure and classical face of the actress. She was standing up; and surveyed him with an inquiring eye, which, on the stage, seemed to signify, "What means this intrusion, sir?"

Mr. Pelly felt a little diffidence in explaining; but he was a man of readiness and of many resources; and he at once leaped to the conclusion that to merely touch on the subject of those she might dislike would be sufficient for an introduction. So he said—

"I am acquainted with Mr. Charles Benbow and Lady Rosa."

Her face changed at once to an expression of eagerness.

"Then they have sent you to me. What is your name? who are you?"

He told her.

Then she asked, "What profession?"

And he had to reply to that also.

"Oh! I begin to see," she said, smiling.

"Well, go on. Begin. What did they tell you to arrange?"

Mr. Pelly thought his best course was to surrender.

"You are right," he said, "I must own it. I am a friend of all the parties concerned; and I must tell you that these strange proceedings down at Banff have been the cause of gossip and stories, which, as you know, in the case of families, is never desirable. I can assure you there are most unpleasant things said about Mr. Benbow, really so disagreeable, and even painful, I should not like to repeat them. And now I would put it to you whether this is agreeable to all the parties concerned."

"Oh," she said, quickly, "so he sent you here. He has many agents, it seems."

"On the word of a gentleman, no. I assure you I do not know him, nor have I heard from him; but I feel for him, and all that. I believe he has suffered."

Her eyes were straining eagerly.

"Oh, he has suffered, has he?"

"He is so changed, his friends say they hardly know him. In fact, they seem to think that he is a little wild, or mad. But why should this please you?—unless some

great injury had been done to you, and then, of course," he added, cautiously.

"I have not said so—or, at least, should not say so to a gentleman who is a mere stranger to me; especially to one who has come to investigate—to make out all he can about me and from me, to please his lady friends."

"Oh, I assure you—"

"Oh, you will not deny it, I am certain; you are too much of a gentleman. But I cannot tell you anything. I may not. Still, you are a barrister; and, I am sure, are quick-witted enough to guess. There is no frightful mystery about it. Suppose that I know something, and have a hold over Mr. Benbow. I neither deny nor admit it. But there is nothing wonderful in such a thing. You are welcome to go back and tell that much to those who sent you. Further, they may know this: that this is but the beginning; more is to come by and by, which will surprise you, and the world, and—least of all—Mr. Benbow!"

Mr. Pelly rose to go.

"My intentions were good in coming here, that I can assure you. I always think of that French proverb about washing linen. I am sure you will forgive me if I advise you to be cautious. It is much better to be quiet, and *arrange* these things."

"It might be impossible to arrange this. Good morning."

JANET.

A NORTH COUNTRY IDYLL.

UP in the North, when waving woods were tinged

By the departing summer's fondest rays,
Three happy tourists, weary o' Cockaigne—
We sketched, wrote verses, gave our wit full fling,
Each hungering for the topmost mastership
In arts, *belles lettres*, science, and the rest.

In merry mood we plodded o'er the hills;
Stood bathed in sunshine on the purpling moors;
Grew learned on light and shade, and deeply moved
By the reflected glory o' the sky,
While standing on th' margin of a lake;
Were garrulous in verse, and cast abroad
Whole quires o' "copy" to the wayward winds;
Framed legends about beauteous shepherd youths;
And sighed for antique stories, bright as stars,
In the eternal silence o' th' past.

At last—it was the day before we left
The breezy uplands for th' toiling town—
We reached, as evening came across th' land,
A modest maid, wi' downward-looking eyes.
A little village shining 'mid the hills;
The fragrant heather, like a purple zone,
Encircled it. The orchard boughs down-hung,

Heavy with fruit; and fields o' golden corn
Went idly swaying in th' languid breeze.
Each cottage door was trim wi' bright-hued flowers;
And here and there a modest mansion stood,
Betokening a sort o' affluence.
Near to th' village green we found our inn,
And therein took our ease; until th' moon
Came slowly o'er the seaward-stretching hills:
A weird, sad lover who had travelled far,
Nor found her long-lost love, nor comfort found.
Then went we forth to meditate, and cast
A fragrant incense to th' evening star.

"Ah, who would think," said Beetroot, with a sigh,
"That here, where peace and plenty shine afar,
Sorrow and suffering have held their own?
High on th' moor you saw—just ere we took
The lane which led us to th' village green—
A crazy mill, with torn and tattered sails,
O'ershadowing a melancholy pool,
All fringed with nettles, flags, and rotting weeds.
A stunted willow tries in vain to shoot
Young buds upon its old and withering boughs;
Which, as the sad winds sweep down from th' hills,
Moan like a spirit racked by fiercest pain.
You know the way in which th' story runs,
Which every village gossip here details,
With cautious beckonings and whispers low?"
"No," answer you. "How strange! 'twas told to me

Twelve months ago, when rustivating here.
But, take this path. Yonder the rotten mill
Catches the fitful gleaming o' th' moon."

Ere long we stood beside th' turgid pool;
Then, lying—not without an anxious air—
Among the long, sleek grass, attention gave,
And melancholy grew o'er Janet's fate.

"Too true the tale!" said he; "as well they know
Who knew the maiden; and not fondly framed,
On some long summer day, by idle poet.

"Down in a little cottage by the brook,
Lived Janet with her mother: there these twain,
Contented, led a quiet and happy life,
Free from the troubles o' the noisy world,
And ignorant of all its bitterness.
Rich they were not; but yet had modest wealth,
The product o' long years o' patient toil
Upon th' farm across th' distant hills—
Sold when her father died, some years ago.
Janet was what is called a comely maid;
Truly, not handsome; but with winning ways,
Rivalling the charms which beauty might have lent.
The village cronies, passing by the door,
While she went deftly spinning at her wheel,
Said, 'Ah! if ours were only half as good
As Janet, what a comfort it would be!'
In neatest kirtle at the village church,
Sweetly demure, with roses red and white
Upon her cheeks, she sat; and you might hear,
Through the shrill trebles and the deeper bass
Of sturdy choristers, her clear, sweet voice,
'Give us, O Lord, this day our daily bread.'
The little children, after service time,
Clung round her, and, all shy and tremulous,
Said, 'Janet, take us with you by the brook,
And show us pretty flowers, and where the birds
Build, and the bees make honey all th' day.'

And Janet did so; and the matrons, pleased,
Said, 'What a wife this Janet, now, will make!'

"The brook by which she and the children strayed
Is fed from this sad tarn; and on its banks
Grew many a moorland flower, and richest ferns;
And there were found the nests of rarest birds,
And strange fowls, blown here from the neighbour-
ing sea.

Janet was deeply learned on birds and flowers,
Reading old books while yet she was a child,
And roamed at will along the uplands sweet.
Her being took its finest forms and lines
From Nature, and a strange desire arose
To learn the secrets of its inmost heart.
Therefore she was a lover of the fields,
And the broad moorlands, and the dimpling brook;
And brought her dear old books here, botanized,
Comparing hues and delicate forms of flowers
With what she saw upon each printed page;
And soon—because her people were not used
To students and the like—she got the name
Of being curious and fanciful.
'Twere better,' said they, 'she should sit and spin,
Than read old books, and wander oft alone.'

"It chanced that, wandering thus, she came one
day—
Following a curious bird with speckled wings—
To where the brook flows downward from the tarn.
The white-haired miller, who had owned the mill,
Had died six months before; and it was held
By Hugh, his eldest son, whose wayward life,
Expanding, guided only by caprice,
Was flecked by many a flaw. Yet as much grist
Came to the mill; and as he owned the land
Which stretched on every side around the mill,
People were blind to all his grievous sins,
And doff'd their hats when'er they passed his way—
Hating the man, but worshipping his goods.

"Charmed by his graceful mien, the guileless
maid
Heard him discourse on things she loved the most;
For, in a fashion, he was learned too.
He showed her nooks where grew the choicest
plants;

And, warmed with bald enthusiasm, found
Some beauty in the commonest of weeds.
And he made verses, telling of her charms,
And bright with love and many pretty things.
So these twain, wandering along the brook,
And by the margin of the dismal tarn,
And hand in hand across the blooming heath,
Passed many a pleasant summer afternoon.
Down in the little village, people said,
'This comes of wandering and reading books.'
Robin the carter, driving from the mill
One summer night, just when the moon was full,
Heard a strange cry; and, looking round, beheld
Janet and Hugh close to the moonlit mill—
She with her hands across her pallid face,
Weeping; and he careless and unconcerned.
And people shook their heads, and then forbade
Their little ones to gather at her side,
Or wander with her by the dimpled brook,
To hear her tell of flowers and birds and bees.

"Soon all the guileless maiden's happy looks
Deserted her. No more at village church,
'Have mercy on us, Lord!' she fondly prayed.
Her face grew wanner than a wintry dawn.

Hugh married Janet. Soon he tired of her,
And oft her mother found her weeping.

"One dark night
They looked for her; and, going to her room,
Searched all in vain. At last they found this note:
'God help me and protect me!'

"Day followed day,
But she came not again. At last, in fear,
They searched the brook and dragged the dismal
tarn;
And there they found a lock of golden hair,
A book on ferns, some worn forget-me nots,
Tied to a stone; and farther on, a shawl
Cast off.

"Ere yet the early moon had reached its prime,
Hugh left the mill, and sold the spreading fields.
He started off for foreign lands. Rumour says,
He perished lately in a drunken brawl;
But none may know for certain.

"Janet's fate
Conjecture fails to fathom. Years ago,
A villager, who left his quiet hills
For London, passing through the gaslit streets,
Saw a wild face, all rich with faded charms;
And as the girl's eyes met his, she turned away
And fled, and lost herself in London's whirl;
And this, he says, was Janet. None may know
Save God, where Hugh's young wife is hid."

We left the dreary spot, not wondering now
Why village youths and maidens shun the place.
The owl shrieked wildly in the rotting mill,
A weary wind went rumbling in the hills,
And the sad moorfowls crooned across the marsh.
Faintly below us moved the round of life;
And, hastening on, we reached the village inn
Just as the antique clock was striking ten.

LOAFING CONSIDERED AS A PROFESSION.

WEBSTER defines "Loafer" as "An idle man, a vagrant who seeks his living by sponging or expedients." I propose to raise loafing to a profession, and to add the following to the above definition:—"An idle gentleman who gets his living by elegant expedients." Having, I hope, excited the curiosity of my readers, I proceed to develop my novel plan for the benefit of mankind.

Visitors at the seaside must frequently have remarked, on the pier, on the beach, at the public promenades or libraries, a number of gentlemen of good address and manners—in fact, *bene nati bene vestiti*—who appear to have nothing in the world to do, and to devote their whole time in doing it efficiently. They are mostly married men, who have followed some profession in earlier life, but have retired from it for various reasons; officers who wouldn't go again to Timbuc-

too, and couldn't effect an exchange; barristers whose only attorney died their third year on circuit, and whose successor did not think them worthy of his confidence; younger men who were never brought up to anything in particular, but who have had a little money left them, and prefer the quietness of a rural life to the *fumum strepitumque* of the metropolis. Now, these gentlemen—and they are gentlemen, or they would be unfit for the profession I have invented for them—are generally of moderate if not limited means, and I have no doubt would jump at any plan which would not only increase their income, but the pleasures of society; nor would they, I am sure, be behindhand in subscribing for a handsome testimonial to the author of their happiness.

For the sake of convenience and the full comprehension of the word as hereafter used, let us take the verb "to loaf," as signifying "to walk about with no particular object in view"—that is a fair definition of the word, without being offensive. Well, then, these gentlemen are Loafers in my sense. They loaf into a billiard-room; they loaf into a club, whose funds perhaps they benefit to the extent of a glass of sherry and bitters; they loaf into an hotel to pick up a bit of news; others loaf in a boat and think they are taking exercise, or on horseback after the harriers, pull up at a gate, where they dismount, pull out a sandwich and a flask, light a cigar, and look with calm contempt on the noble sport of jelly-dogging. What a richness of new words will be added to the English language if I continue literary pursuits! Perhaps they are seen to the best advantage at a grand archery meeting. The agony depicted on their woeful countenances is very remarkable. They hate the entertainment; but it is their duty to loaf down to the field and see what's going on—it is an excuse for arraying themselves in all their glory, and they may get a dinner or two out of the transaction. They sprawl about the grass in every conceivable attitude, from that of the Venus Anadyomene to the Madonna of Correggio; and anything more utterly blank and vapid than their existence it would be impossible to conceive—when lo! a touch of the enchanter's wand, the back of the scene opens; the good fairy appears, attended by a host of fairy Loafers; the magic words are spoken; and the hitherto dull, bored, and

spiritless Loafer is borne up to the regions of bliss and the golden realms of King Stuff, realizes an income, and lives for ever afterwards a rich and valued member of an almost perfected state of society.

But before I begin to develop my plan, I must own candidly that it is at present in a very crude state. As I only thought of it this morning as I was dressing—which is about two hours ago—it cannot be supposed that so elaborate a scheme could be completed in a few hours or even days. But it is sufficiently advanced to be intelligible to the meanest capacity: the details must be arranged in deference to the habits and customs of the inhabitants of the place where my invention may be adopted. I think I cannot do better than adapt my system to my own watering-place, St. Crabbe's, and see how it would work.

In the first place, then, a number—say a dozen—of Loafers must form themselves into an association; and, for the purposes of their profession, must at once engage, in a fashionable part of the town, near the chief hotels, club, bathing-machines, &c., a handsome suite of offices, containing the following apartments:—At the entrance, the hon. sec.'s room: a door and *portière* in the hall will here cut off the rest of the offices from the view of visitors, till a preliminary and satisfactory arrangement has been entered into with the hon. sec. And here I would remark that the hon. sec. must be a gentleman of equal parts and attainments with the members of the association; only he will have a fixed income—say of £1,000 per annum, paid quarterly; and if there is any difficulty in finding such a one as I describe for so beggarly a remuneration, as no doubt there will be, I should have no objection to offer my valuable services for a short time only.

When the visitor has concluded the delicate business, to be explained presently, with the hon. sec., he will be conducted to a waiting-room, handsomely furnished, supplied with all the papers, periodicals, &c., of the day; next to this will be a small room, dimly lighted but luxuriously furnished. Here an attendant, behind a bar fitted with every modern convenience, will dispense, to those only who are considered worthy, the drinks of this and foreign countries. Although not yet apparent, this office has a most important signification. Then will come the board-room, where the association

sit; and opening out of the board-room is the dining-room, with always twelve covers laid on board days, and sometimes more. The kitchens and offices are, of course, beyond the dining-room; but, as they are meant for pleasure and not for business, they need not further be alluded to.

Now, then, having got your association and your offices—and here let me assure the timid Loafer that he will not have to expend a sixpence of capital in all the above arrangements, that he will actually have them forced upon him by grateful tradesmen—it will be necessary to find a suitable name for the association and issue a prospectus; something of this sort:—

“The United Loafers’ Visitors’ Protection and Delectation Association, founded for the purpose of rendering the sojourn of the stranger agreeable, and for assisting him at once to those pursuits abroad, physical or intellectual, to which he is most addicted at home.”

The sagacious reader will now begin to have an inkling of what I am driving at, and the prospectus will have to be drawn—any broken-down promoter, of whom I am assured there are several in the City, will do it for a shilling—from the following sketch of the *modus operandi* of the society.

During the season, a servant of the society, whose elegant livery will at once command notice, will attend at the station on the arrival of every train, and every respectable-looking visitor will be presented with the prospectus, enclosed in a handsome envelope, on the outside of which will be legibly printed the name and objects of the association as above, with a request that the stranger will visit the offices of the association before he pledges himself to descend at any hotel or lodging house.

If he is a sensible man, he will at once proceed to the offices and have an interview with the respected hon. sec.—and here will be received the first fee due to the association: a guinea will be the charge for that interview; but, lest the feelings of two high-minded gentlemen should be wounded, one as the recipient, the other as the donor of the money, none will visibly pass between them. When the visitor asks to see the secretary, the porter will hand to him a handsomely chased iron money-box, with the legend, “Secretary’s fee, one guinea,” legibly inscribed upon it; into which the

visitor will drop the fee. The secretary will, of course, explain to him the further objects of the association; but, in the first place, will recommend him the best hotel or lodgings to stop at, the best butcher, baker, grocer, &c.—now you see why the Loafers will fare sumptuously every day—the ordinary amusements of the place, and the best way of enjoying them. If the visitor is merely bent on a short stay, his interview with the secretary will probably terminate here; but, if he is anxious to be introduced to the pleasures of society, the real business of the association will now commence.

I have said that the twelve Loafers are, and must be, gentlemen. That is, they must have the *entrée* to the best families in the place, and each one possess one or more talents *de société*, to ensure his welcome to any house where a party is given, with a particular object. Thus, supposing it is a ball, the Loafer who is at the head of that department of the association must be an admirable dancer himself. He must be able to lead a cotillon with refined skill and grace, and invent new combinations every time. He must have the best *répertoire* of dance music at his fingers' ends, so as to be able to suggest to the orchestra the most voluptuous waltz, the most popular quadrille, or the liveliest Lancers, at the proper moment. Many a young waverer, of fabulous income, has been hooked for ever by a dreamy waltz, ravishingly played, if his partner has turned up her lovely eyes at that moment of intense excitement which immediately precedes exhaustion; and I myself nearly succumbed to the exquisite Dora McJanus in a set of waltzes called "Faust"—but that was five and twenty years ago, and is neither here nor there, as it was not Dora McJanus I married. That is the ball Loafer's duty to his hostess. To his client, his duty would be to introduce him, of course, to the mistress of the house, and to the best partners; if he seeks marriage, to keep a list of eligible *parties*, with a *catalogue raisonné* of their respective fortunes, derived from the best sources; to warn him if the champagne be doubtful, or if the sherry has ripened in Gilbey's vineyards; to prevent his being overcome by either, and see that a proper supply of bon-bons, with the quaintest of toilettes and mottoes inside, be stored ready to his hand for the purposes of flirtation. But this is merely by the way, that the reader may at

once comprehend the wide operations of the association.

I will now suppose that the stranger is anxious to enjoy the further benefits of the association, and ready to pay for them. He will then be introduced into the reading-room, while the secretary informs the board that a new subscriber is waiting to be introduced. The stranger is naturally nervous at the apparent mystery with which the proceedings are conducted; and, being in a strange place, has some disagreeable feelings as to the object with which he has been decoyed to the offices. Many of my readers may have experienced similar misgivings when waiting in the Masters' or Wardens' hall at Oxford previous to being examined for matriculation. When the secretary reappears, with a smiling countenance and his pleasantest manner—I offered myself as above because I possess these two qualities in an unusual degree—he will probably find the stranger's nerves very highly strung. They must, perforce, pass through the little room, which, as I said before, has an important signification. Here again the secretary's tact and *savoir vivre* will, or ought to, display itself.

"You are hot, or cold, or dusty, or wet," as the case may be, "sit down for a moment. The Loafers have some little business on hand now. We have a few minutes: let me recommend you a cigarette and a refreshing potion; our servant there is skilled in the confection of various drinks, some of them unknown to this country—will you allow me to prescribe for you?"

A delicious compound is then brought in, cold or hot as suits the stranger's state, and it is the association's fault if he does not immediately conceive an undying respect for so admirable an institution. The secretary here, if he is a man of the world, will begin to speak disparagingly of the place and its people.

"We can't do things here, of course, as you do in—(Manchester, Heligoland, the Balearic Islands: wherever he may come from)—but our association was founded to make the visits of strangers agreeable here; and we do our best."

Of course, the poor devil thinks that during his stay he will have the run of the bar, the di—, —but I am anticipating—and is quite ready to drop another guinea—pray note the sovereign and the shilling: no vulgar sovereign alone—into a second iron

box, as richly chased as the former, with a different legend, "The Grand Loafer's Fee;" and, at the moment he does so, a bell rings, touched by the masterly hand of the secretary, which reminds the stranger not so much of his guinea as of his approaching appearance before the committee. Of course, he has nothing to pay beyond his preliminary two guineas; and the affable secretary leads the way.

When the visitor enters the room, he will find as many of the Loafers as are not on duty seated at a table. The room will be handsomely furnished—woe to the town upholsterer if it is not: he would be a ruined man—and pictures of celebrated Loafers will be hung round the room. It is essential, in order to inspire confidence, that the Loafers be dressed in the height of fashion; it will also enable them to assume a moderately severe tone to a man who is hot, dirty, and dusty, after a long journey. He, too, will feel his inferiority in the presence of those distinguished-looking individuals, and will be prepared to pay heavily for the privilege of enjoying their society. The chairman will then ask him a few necessary questions. Is he married? If so, has he daughters, or sons, whom he wishes to marry? His title to be considered a gentleman? His rent-roll, or the annual amount of his till if in commerce? What portion he intends to give his children? And the names of his solicitor and banker.

The reader will at once perceive that it will be necessary to be stricter with a married than with a single man. For instance, it would be advisable to have his wife trotted out to see if she is presentable. The association might, unless very cautious, be the means of throwing some horrid harridan on society, which would at once entirely destroy the confidence which ought to exist between the two. Or they might sacrifice some charming heiress to a penniless adventurer. No sum of money could ever compensate for such *bricoles*—indeed, it would simply be ruin.

The questions being satisfactorily answered, the chairman will announce that the association thinks him worthy of their assistance. He will give him a small book, in which are printed the rules of the society, some of which will possibly surprise him. As for example:—

"Any visitor having a complaint to make of any member, may forward it in writing to

the hon. sec.; but under no circumstances will it be taken notice of. If the visitor should then feel aggrieved, and complain personally to any individual member of the association, or to the public, or to the laws of his country, he will at once be tabooed, and the doors of society will be closed against him."

A printed card will then be handed to him, with a tariff of fees and the name of the Loafer who is at the head of each department. Now observe the results already arrived at. The visitor, before he has selected any department, has paid four guineas. Say, on the smallest possible computation, that, on the average, there are five applications on three hundred days of the year: there is at once an income of more than £6,000 per annum. That is but one and a small way in which money could be made, besides the fees.

Let me explain. The visitor is anxious to practise whist, he is desirous of emulating the great masters, and hopes so to improve his game that, by the time he returns to the Balearic Islands, or wherever he comes from, he may be able to hold his own with the mayor, doctor, and other dignitaries of the place. On looking down the card he will see that he can have the advantages of a professor's services for, say, £1 is. an hour. He announces his preference for that department, and the professor immediately takes him in hand. Perhaps there is another entry in the same department. Now, mark! The two visitors are proposed, seconded, and elected at the club through the influence of the professor. The club would never dare to put itself in opposition to the will of the Loafers. The professor ascertains that the object of the visitors is to thoroughly master the principles of the game, and that they are prepared to submit to a temporary loss to attain that object. How will he naturally proceed? He will say to his pupils, "Now, the best way to learn the game is to be pitted against two good players, with slight odds against you, besides the play, to keep your attention to the table. Therefore, Colonel Dumbey and I will play you two, guinea points and five pounds on the rub, the honours to count only on our side. This method, pursued steadily for two hours a day for a couple of months, will teach you more about the game than you would acquire in five years' play with muffs; and when you return to your

native place you will make them easy victims." Here, again, is a pretty source of income. Assuming, with points and bets, our friend nets, as he ought to, at least thirty pounds a-day, besides the guinea an hour; well, it does not require much acumen to arrive at the annual total. It must be understood that these profits of the professor go to the common fund. The Loafers are the soul of honour, and don't care about the miserable pelf; their object ought to be to take care by every honourable means that their coffers are in such a state at the end of the year that a good dividend shall be declared.

Some of the departments may appear curious to the uninitiated; but, as I think I said before, I have adapted them to the requirements of St. Crabbe's. The conjunction of "Rights of Women and Balls," to be presided over by a parson, is only strange till you are made acquainted with our idiosyncrasies. We have a fine body of the shrieking sisterhood in this place, I promise you. Don't we men tremble when we see these brawny spinsters, all teeth and spectacles, coming down upon us. Well, last year we had a social something or another association here, when the celebrated Miss McTaggart gave that funny lecture which drove all the married ladies blushing out of the room. I cannot understand why that sect should always be lecturing, or petitioning, or mixing themselves up generally with matters unfit for publication. In the evening we had a ball in honour of the Social Somethings, and an uglier or a dirtier lot I vow I never beheld. So the sprightly McTaggart permitted herself to hope that the pleasures of the mazy dance were to be for her. But the gilded youth of St. Crabbe's all declined the honour, with the exception of a newly arrived curate, who undertook her, and whom she nearly frightened out of his life. This *spretæ injuria formæ* was too much for her, and she left my friend, Miss Bagge, the next morning in such a hurry that she forgot to take with her "Mdle. de Maupin," which was discovered under her pillow by the housemaid.

The contemplation of the possible wealth of the association, and the above *apropos* anecdote, showing how necessary it is that the professional Loafer should be possessed of a delicate tact, have led me away from my visitor, whom I left perusing the tariff. When he has decided according to his

tastes, he would then be invited to dinner. My readers can imagine what that would be like, if I had anything to do with it, from the many excellent repasts I have several times had the honour of introducing them to in this magazine. Indeed, a former editor complained to me that there was a great deal too much eating and drinking in my articles. He did not complain, though, the night he dined with me at the club, and declared, with tears in his eyes, that I *had* a right to preach on the subject I knew most about.

When the dinner is over, the visitor will be politely dismissed. But let him not depart with the idea that he will ever imbibe again that delicious potion in the bar-room, or sit at the Loafer's mahogany. Their memory will never fade; but he will never enjoy the *Saturnia regna* again! The money so honourably gained would be expended by the Loafers on their wives and families, and not in fruitless entertainments to the public. On the other hand, they will be strictly unselfish and never interfere with their clients' interests.

"The joy let others have, and we the name;
And what we want in pleasure, grant in fame."

The clients would always have the prettiest partners, the largest heiresses, the warmest corners, the cleverest blue-stocking, the best pools in the river, and so on. Therefore, it behoveth that the Loafers should be all married men. Why, a giddy young bachelor Loafer, who should for a moment forget the dignity of his profession, might play the deuce and all with the association! Imagine such a one, lost to all sense of decency, whirling round the lovely and accomplished Miss Nugget, while Jack Harduppe, who had only paid his fees that morning, was ruefully looking on! Besides, he would be robbing his associates. Any marriage contracted under the auspices of the Loafers would involve a handsome percentage, say ten per cent. on the settlement, and a handsome *doucur* besides. The *sic vos non vobis* principle would be carefully excluded from their dealings. Do nothing for nothing, ought to be their motto.

I have already remarked that this, like all great inventions, requires a perfection of detail which cannot be entered into within the present limits. There is the idea—here is the man; and I have mentioned the salary I should be content with, at first.

Any body of gentlemen wishing to enter further into the matter will be good enough to communicate with me through the editor, who will, no doubt, with his invariable courtesy, forward any letters to my address.

CARRIAGE PAID.

BY ALBANY FONBLANQUE.

[NOTE.—Some of my readers' old acquaintance, Mr. Sampson Lager—late of the detective police—has taken a cottage in the country, near where I sometimes spend Saturday and Sunday. He is as chatty and pleasant as ever; but, as a rule, declines talking "shop." "No, sir," he says; "Scotland-yard and me was very good friends for thir-ty-two years; and Scotland-yard and me parted amicable last June twelvemonth. I never could make out, for the life of me, why gentlefolks is so fond of reading about thieves, and that. What odds is it to you how they get took up and circum-vented, so that they *is* took up and circum-vented regular? Besides, you see, sir, I'm one of the old sort. I hadn't none of the education officers in my line gets nowadays, and I couldn't put things down right even if I wanted to. But I do like having a chat with you, now and again, about this and that; because, somehow or other, you make it easy. No, you don't pump *me*. Don't you think that. When I've got my steam up, you open the right switches with your remarks and what-not, and on I go the way I want to run—that's all." I should like to be permitted to reproduce some of Mr. Lager's chat about "this and that." We will begin, if you please, with a story he told me about his *bête noir*—the county police.]

"**S**PEAKING of men as I find them," said Mr. Lager, "the county po-lice is duffers. I don't say that you mayn't find a sharp hand here and there; but, as a lot, *they're duffers*. Lord! what a lark I had with some of them down at Stoke Winckstead, where I took Tom Burrows. What had Tom been up to? Well, nothing bad. The information against him was that he was going to commit a breach of the peace in company with one William Smith, alias Steam Bill, of Wolverhampton, the champion of the middle weights. Yes, sir, prize-fighters both; and a mill was on between 'em for £150 a-side, to come off in the London district. But, bless your heart! there was no fear of a "breach of the peace." It was a publicans' fight, it was. What is a publicans' fight? Why, a sham, got up to fill their bar parlours when the deposits are made, and to get a lot of flats to pay two or three pound a-head to go by train or steamboat—chartered for a third of the money—fifty miles into the country; where they find out that there is to be no fight after all, or a man goes down without

a blow, and so ends it. Steam Bill's name was up because of a dashing battle he'd fought in the Black Country, where they fight because they like it; and so Mr. Barney Isaacs, who kept the Blue Cat, down Whitechapel, and Nat Hopkins, of the Bell Inn, Lambeth, they put their heads together; and in a week or two the sporting papers were full of the fight which was to come off between Steam Bill, backed by Hopkins, and Barney Isaacs's Unknown: which means—for I see you don't know much about these things, sir—some man whom Barney would name at the time of staking the last instalment of the money to be fought for. But some of you gentlemen who write for the press were down upon them—there had been a brutal affair down in the Essex Marshes, in which a good many people who ought to have known better got robbed and hurt—and the word was passed to Scotland-yard to stop it. Sergeant Switcher was to look after Steam Bill, and I got orders to find out Mr. Barney's Unknown, and put some salt on his tail. As usual, orders were given to the county po-lice to co-operate.

"I very soon found out who the Unknown was, and where he was. He'd been sent down to Stoke Winckstead, to make-believe to train, so that his backers might pretend they had meant business when the fuss came. Do you know Stoke Winckstead? No? Well, it isn't likely that you should, not being a bargeman. It's just a public house and a few cottages, close by a lock on the river Ouse. The most dead-alive place I ever saw, and about fifteen miles from anywhere. I took two of my men with me, and we trapped Master Tom as nice as nice could be.

"Said I to him, 'Tom Burrows,' said I, 'you aint a bad sort of lad, though you've got into uncommon shady company. It's all up with this mill, and so it's no use your tearing your shirt. Are you a-going to come along quietly, or are you not?'

"Says he, 'Where's the other man?' meaning Steam Bill.

"I said, 'Oh, he's all right—don't you fret about him!'

"'Well,' said he, 'if *he's* squared, I don't mind.'

"I wasn't a-going to tell him that 'all right' didn't mean 'squared,' as I put it. I went on—

"'Now, Tom,' says I, 'I didn't think to

get this trick done so soon, and I've days to spare. They tell me there's fishing here, and I'm mortal fond of it. You give me your word that you'll go on quietly with my men, and it will be better for you. You make a row, and lose me my fishing, and I'll serve you out, as sure as my name's Lager.'

"He was tired to death of living in that lonely place, and gave in.

"'Werry good,' I says. 'Now, when you get your little public, as you hope to do some day, and you want a lift on licensing day, which a man who knows and does his dooty can give, why, you've only got to say, 'Mr. Lager, you've not bin fishing lately, I suppose?'—that's enough. I shall understand. I shall say, 'What is it, my lad?' and then you can speak out.

"Next day I was up betimes, spinning for jack with the landlord of the inn. We took our grub and a stone bottle with us in the boat, and didn't get back until near five o'clock; when the girl who waited gave me what she called a letter, which a man on horseback had brought from Backford—the nearest railway station—about an hour before. It was a telegram, ordering me up to London immediately—not because I'd stopped 'a-fishing—no, I'm not the man to take a liberty—I was free to stop—but because something had turned up for which I was wanted particular.

"It was all very well to say come back immediately. But how? I couldn't walk to Backford—tired as I was—in time to catch the last train, and there wasn't a horse to be got for love or money.

"I went up to a bend in the river, to see if there was any barge in sight coming down, which might take me on; when, just as I was mounting a stile which led from the towing-path into the road, I heard the sound of wheels. I crept back, and watched through the hedge. It was a old railway station fly, with four men inside, and one on the box alongside the driver. It stopped just in front of where I was, and the men got out.

"Says one, 'We mustn't drive any nearer the house.'

"Says another, 'Someone ought to go and look about, whilst the rest remain here.'

"Says a third, 'Nonsense. Let us go in a body, surround the house, and take him!'

"Says I to myself, 'The county po-lice,

by jingo!—after Tom, and just twenty-four hours late.'

"Would they give me a lift back to the station? A very short consideration set me a-thinking that they would see me further first. Besides, they hadn't room, and it wasn't very likely that any of them would have stopped behind in that place—not being a fisher—to please me. Not if I told him I was wanted on duty? No, sir; least of all then. They don't love us London officers much; and, you see, I'd just bin and taken the bread out of their mouths. It would have been rather nuts to them to think that I was going to get into a row. They're as jealous as women—all on 'em.

"In about two minutes I'd made up my mind what to do. I went round to the back of the inn, and called out the landlord.

"'How much love and affection is there between you and the county po-lice, Jem?' I said.

"'— them for a set of sneaks!' Jem growled.

"'By all means,' said I. 'Now, you go and tell your wife and daughter not to say a word, whatever may happen in the house, and then you hook it out of the way for an hour. I don't suppose I owe you a sovereign for what me and my men have had; but here's two, if you do what I tell you.'

"He took the bait, and was off like the big jack we lost in Dinton Mill-pool that morning.

"I got into the room where Tom had lived, without being observed; took off my coat and waistcoat, and listened until I heard a step outside. Then I began to hit out into the air, right and left, up and down, right leg foremost, left leg foremost, as I'd seen young gents do at the Gymnasium when training for boat races and what not.

"'It's him,' said a voice outside the window. 'We've got him. You two stop here, and you come along with me.'

"They was a pretty good time making up their mind to come in; and, when they did, it was all three in a lump.

"'Don't be a fool!' shouted the one nearest to me. 'We're constables. We've got a warrant against you. There's two more men outside the window. It's no use. You'll only get into trouble.'

"By this time I was dancing round them, sparring away pretty much as Mr. Toole would do in an Adelphi screamer; telling

them to 'come on,' and have their three heads knocked into one. But, lor! I wasn't going to hurt them, or let them hurt me, more than was enough for my purpose—and that wasn't much. They got me down comfortably on a horsehair sofey there was, and slipped on the darbies. I didn't use my arms, but I give it them with my tongue, I can tell you.

"I roared—I swore—I blubbered. I was a ruined man. I'd lost my only chance to get on with 'the Fancy.' Steam Bill would say I was afraid. My backers would give me up. I'd give fifty pound to be let go. What had a poor cove like me done that they should ruin me? It was a shame. It wasn't fair. Would they come out and fight me, two at a time?"

"Then I pitched into the landlord. It was he who had given the 'office.' I would knock his——head off. There was nothing bad I didn't threaten to do to Jem.

"Now, stop that," said the inspector at last. "It wasn't Jem at all. The office came from London, and a London detective was to have been in with us; but we've been too quick for him."

"I was obliged to jam my face into the sofey pillar, and kick a bit, to hide my laughter. But they—poor innocents!—they took it all in. I was so awful riled at not being let fight. I was terrible fond of fighting, and *they* had got me!"

"The inspector began to think he was someone. He patted me on the back, called me 'my man,' and promised not to be hard on me before the magistrates if I would come along quiet.

"I promised I would come along quiet as a lamb, if they treated me like a gentleman, took off the handcuffs, and brought my luggage. One of them had to stay behind, to make place for me in the fly; and another to make place for my portmanteau.

"P'raps the London detective will give you a cast back when he comes," said I.

"Bother the London detective," says he. "I don't want to have nothing to do with him."

"P'raps you're right," says I.

"I know I am," said he.

"But, hang it all," said I, "if you was to find *him* boxed up in a place like this, and wanting to get back to his family and that, you'd be glad to give him a lift."

"I'd see him——first," he said. "Let them Londoners keep themselves to them-

selves, and not come interfering with us, as though we didn't know our dooty."

"May be, they only obeys their orders," said I.

"They puts themselves a deal too forward," says he.

"So they do," said I. "They're reg'lar humbugs!"

"They don't humbug *me*," said he, with his nose in the air.

"I shouldn't like to have to get my living at that game," says I, as mild as milk.

"What game?" says he.

"Why, trying to humbug you, sir," says I.

"You're right, my man," says he. "Would you like to take anything to drink afore we start?"

"Well, sir, we drove off to Beckford, just caught the 8.15 train, and went on to Peterborough, first class—the inspector paying the difference out of his own pocket, he was so pleased.

"I've got him!" he cried out to the sergeant on duty, as we entered the police station.

"Got who?"

"Why, the Unknown."

"The deuce you have! And the London man?"

"Well, sir," says I, stepping forward, "he's got him too—leastwise, he's got *him*, and *he's* got the other. So it's all O. K. I am Sampson Lager, gentlemen all, at your service. I got a message this afternoon, saying I was wanted immediately in London; and, as I had no way of getting to the station, and sup-posed these officers would not give me a lift, knowing who I was—a sup-position which wasn't far out—I was guilty of a little innocent de-ception. If you get the evening papers here, I dessay you'll find the examination of Thomas Burrows, alias Barney Isaacs's Unknown, before Sir Thomas Henry, this very blessed morning, at Bow-street. I've just time to catch the mail, and so—"

"No, you don't!" shouted the inspector. "I'll be——if I stand this! Stop him!"

"Now," I said, "look here. You hold your tongue, and I'll hold mine. Would you like to see a pretty little paragraph running all round the country newspapers, headed "A Policeman Hoaxed," and giving a correct account of how a certain inspector, therein named and described, *was not to be humbugged by London men?* No, you

wouldn't. Well, then, shake hands, and good night, for I've no time to lose."

"But you hav'n't held your tongue, Lager," I remarked when he had finished; "though your breach of the bargain has given me a good story."

"Well, sir," he said, "if you had minded what I said about Mr. Henry being the magistrate at Bow-street, you'd a knowed that this come off a pretty good time ago, and I havn't mentioned no names—have I now? Leastwise, not of the county po-lice. That there inspector was a reg'lar duffer, but he got on. Lor bless you! a duffer as can look solemn and hold his tongue generally does get on; and the county po-lice has a special providence a-watching over 'em."

"And that is—?"

"The county justices," replied Mr. Lager, with a wink.

NATURAL HISTORY OF WASPS.— PART II.

WE concluded the first part of this article with one or two anecdotes, showing the pugnacious habits of hornets; yet these creatures must have their amiable points, although we may fail to recognize them. Pastor Müller (in 1810) watched a hornet making a nest in an empty beehive. In the beginning of May the nest consisted of a hood over seven cells, none of which contained eggs. These were, however, soon duly laid, and the brood began to appear on June 15th. The growing swarm now endeavoured to close in the nest below; but the familiarity which he had acquired with them enabled him to break away the case as fast as they built it, and thus to keep the interior exposed to view. By killing some of the larvæ (or grubs)—which the workers at once removed—he continued to limit the number of his strange pets; but, when they had amounted to fifty or sixty, the queen was one day lost, after which catastrophe the swarm dwindled away. His hornets not only knew him, and let him handle them, but allowed him to paint their antennæ, by which means he could follow each individual as it pursued its nest-building work. This is not the only case of friendship between men and hornets. Dr. Ormerod was told by a country surgeon of a poor woman, whom he attended, who had made friends with a swarm of hornets which had

built in her cottage roof, and which, if not active friends, were, at all events, harmless acquaintances; and, in the State of New York, the Americans, relying on their non-aggressive habits, are said sometimes to hang a hornet's nest in their parlours, with the view of diminishing the plague of flies.

It would carry us far beyond the proposed bounds of this article if we were to attempt to describe the leading points in the anatomy of these insects; but there is one part of their structure which presents such remarkable evidence of design that we cannot resist adverting to it. We refer to the co-adaptation of the anterior and posterior wings to each other during flight, and the locking-gear by which this is effected. Amongst the characteristics of the order *Hymenoptera*, Professor Westwood mentions "the connection during flight of the two wings on each side of the body, by means of a series of minute hooks along the anterior margin of the posterior wings, which catch the hinder margin of the anterior wings, thus producing one continuous surface on each side." He should have added that the points of the hooks turn up, while the posterior edge of the fore-wings presents a crest or ledge turned downwards, beneath which the ends of the hooks catch. In the female wasps, thirty-two seems the standard number of these little hooks, which have a bristle-like structure; in the males the number is smaller and uncertain, commonly under twenty. From the occurrence of a smaller number of hooks in the weaker-flying of the sexes, Mr. Newport* inferred that their number stands in a direct relation to the power of flight. This locking-gear is seen to the greatest advantage in the humble-bee, which does not fall within the limits of this paper; but, with a low magnifying power, it comes out as a very beautiful object—somewhat resembling a rope moulding—in the hornet. By this arrangement, the wings are not merely hooked together, but they are kept parallel and in contact during motion. In their combined action these organs have a much greater forward propelling power than if they acted separately; and, when a wasp wishes to stop her course, her first step is to unlock the wings, when all forward motion is at once stopped.

* See his admirable article on Insects, in "The Cyclopædia of Anatomy and Physiology."

Wasps differ from their neighbours, the bees, in not making wax; their food, as a general rule, not being such as will serve to produce that substance. Some foreign species, however, collect honey; but bee-keepers know very well from where British wasps acquire this kind of food.

If a person who has been stung would like to examine the weapon with which he has been wounded, he must proceed as follows:—He must press the abdomen of a recently killed wasp till the sting and the muscular bulb to which it is attached protrude. The sting must then be grasped at its root with a pair of fine forceps, and drawn gently out; the pressure being continued. By this means the sting, the mechanism which moves it, and the poison bag, may all be obtained for examination under a magnifying glass. The sting will be seen to consist of two very fine bristles, presenting at the outer side a sharp edge finely toothed at the point; and, on the inner side, a flat channelled surface, where they lie in juxtaposition along the middle line. The sheath or scabbard in which these two barbed bristles slide, is a flat, horny structure, consisting of two lateral halves, which separate to allow the protrusion of the sting, and which the unaided eye would readily mistake for the sting itself. It is nearly straight in the workers, but strongly curved in the perfect females. The barbs, when seen quietly lying in their natural position within the body of the insect, are observed to diverge from each other; and to end by being articulated, or jointed, at right angles to a strong horny lever on which several powerful muscles act. By a rapid alternate movement of these levers, the barbs are driven into the wound, the teeth of one barb acting as a fulcrum for the other. The two channelled surfaces of the barbs are pressed firmly together, so as to form a closed tube, down which the venom is forcibly injected to the bottom of the wound by the muscular walls of the poison bag, which is easily distinguished as a hard, roundish, white mass. It consists, in reality, of a strong hollow muscle, made in four segments, like a foot-ball. At the innermost end of this bag, two long glands may be observed, which secrete the poison; while from the opposite end issues a long, strong duct, which conveys the venom to the root of the scabbard. This account of the sting and its appendages will be ren-

dered more clear by a reference to the diagram occurring in p. 181 of Dr. Ormerod's volume, or to fig. 79 in p. 174 of vol. ii. of Westwood's "Classification of Insects," the explanation of the figure being given in p. 181.

It may be safely assumed that every man or boy who reads this paper has assisted at the capture of one or more wasps' nests, and knows something of their general appearance and structure, though he may not be conversant with the mode of their construction. We may possibly enter into this subject in a future article on "Insects' Homes;" at present, we shall confine our remarks to the nature of the material of which these delicate habitations are constructed. It is known as wasp-paper. When examined under the microscope, it is found to consist of various ingredients—as fragments of wood, bark, and dead leaves, filaments of grass, paper cuttings, sand, &c. One ingredient generally predominates: a dark-coloured nest, for example, is probably composed chiefly of herbaceous filaments, while rotten wood is the chief ingredient of the ordinary fawn-coloured nests. But whatever be the crude materials, they are not only held together by mechanical means—as by a felting or interlacing of the fibres—but, after being comminuted by the powerful mandibles, they are united by a mucous secretion, with which the finer particles are worked up into a pulp with the secretion of the salivary glands, which have nothing to do, physiologically, with the digestive process—their function being to yield the adhesive fluid which acts the part we have just noticed, and likewise serves to secrete the silky material of which the cocoons, in which the pupæ are enclosed, are composed. This secretion enables the wasp-paper to resist the action of water at the ordinary temperature; otherwise, every shower would injure the coverings of the nest. In countries where the rain falls with a violence that would dash our British tree-nests to pieces, the paper is replaced by strong cotton cardboard, impervious to moisture; or by ruder materials, as mud.*

* For much interesting matter regarding the structure of the nests of foreign and especially tropical wasps, the reader is referred to Blanchard's work (which we have already noticed), De Sausure's "Études sur la Famille des Vespides," Möbius's "Die Nester der geselligen Wespen," and to Wood's "Homes without Hands." He should

We now proceed to give a brief history of a colony of wasps, from its foundation. As in the case of the solitary wasps, the first care of the mother *vespa* is the construction of her nest; and as soon as each cell is completed she deposits an egg in it, as far inwards as she can reach, and glues it firmly to the wall. The egg projects obliquely for about half a line (one-twenty-fourth of an inch), like a little white speck; and in this position it hatches.

The grub, when duly hatched, does not, however, become a free agent; for its tail remains attached to the egg-shell, while its head is directed downwards, towards the open end of the cell. Barring this partial restraint, it moves freely, feeds abundantly, and grows rapidly. The food consists of insects, fruit, sugar, honey, meat, &c., made up into a pulpy mass in the stomach of the workers, who disgorge it at due intervals close to the mouths of their little charges. As the grub increases in size, it also masticates solid food by means of its mandibles, which are already well-developed; the first set being distinguished from the second by the greater length of the central tooth. The successive forms of the mandibles—(1) of the larva in its first skin, (2) in its second skin, and (3) in the perfect insect, are well shown in p. 226 of Dr. Ormerod's book.

As the cells are more or less vertical, especially towards the centre of the combs, the grubs would roll out of their cradles and die, if it were not for the arrangement already noticed, which, at all events in principle, may be regarded as analogous to the means by which small children are safely retained in their chairs when engaged in the enjoyment of their meals, &c. Even after the larva has cast off its skin, or moulted for the first time, it still for a while remains at anchor, although the connecting rope becomes longer, so as to allow of more extended motion in all directions, till it finally snaps. Dr. Ormerod, who has carefully watched the domestic arrangements of the nests, observes that, as the larva grows, it has to seek, in a remote part of its cell, a position adapted to its

further requirements. This change of position would seem to be a very perilous operation, judging by the large number of small larvæ which are cast out of the nest. For, if they lose their hold, or prematurely become detached from the shell, they fall out of the cells, and are usually carried off by the workers, just as they would remove any other apparently useless material; although occasionally they recognize the true nature of the case, and carefully replace the grubs in the empty cells.

How the change in position is effected is not exactly known; but, as the larva can lengthen and contract its body at pleasure, and bend in any direction, and as, moreover, it has a prehensile apparatus at each extremity—namely, the mandibles at one end, and a peculiar conformation of the legs, or what most people would probably call the tail, at the other—it is easy to see that the animal has possession of the full means of travelling up and down in its cell.

These larval legs are very curious. In the embryonic wasp there is but a single pair, which are connected with the last segment of the abdomen. These larval legs are oval suckers, surrounded by a ring of bristles. When the under portion of the last abdominal ring is applied to a surface, a vacuum can be formed by the withdrawing (into the body of the larva) of two small masses of integument; and this vacuum is sufficient to retain the smaller grubs in their position. When the parts withdrawn are again protruded, the adhesion is at once destroyed.

The journey to the bottom of the cell having been safely accomplished, the larva feeds more greedily, and grows more rapidly than before; and, if carefully watched, may be seen opening its jaws, like a young bird, when its nurse approaches with its meals. It at once begins to prepare for its next change, by beginning to weave the silk lining which is to protect it from external influence during its chrysalis or pupa stage. Before this change actually takes place, it gives up the eating which had occupied most of its time, and devotes itself entirely to spinning. On examining it at this period, we see "a round white cap rising high over the proper margin of the cell. The larva retires from sight, and the nurse-wasps transfer their attentions to other little heads which peep forth from the outer range of the comb."

likewise pay a series of visits to the first room of the Northern Zoological Gallery of the British Museum, in which there is a beautiful collection of the nests of insects arranged by Mr. F. Smith, whose "Catalogue of Hymenoptera in the British Museum" may be consulted with advantage.

On entering upon this stage it moults for a second time; and, in this moulting, it not only throws off its skin and second set of mandibles—which differ materially in shape from the former sets, in having the three teeth of a nearly uniform size—but also such parts as will not be required in the perfect insect. Moreover, it now, for the first time, gets rid of the undigested refuse of food, and the various excrementitious matters which have been accumulating during the whole of the larval stage. Placed as it is, vertically, with its head downwards, in a tolerably closely-fitting cell, if it discharged the undigested fragments of its food, &c., in the ordinary manner of insects and higher animals, it would be constantly lying, as it were, in a sewer; and, to provide against this contingency, the refuse or excrementitious matter is retained in a membranous pouch at the distal end of the bowel. This pouch, which lies within the body of the larva, gradually increases in size till the second moulting, when it is cast off as a hard black mass, close invested—like a spherical sausage—with the surrounding membrane.

We left the embryo entering upon that remarkable sleep from which it was to awaken into a perfect insect. The first indication of the approaching change is afforded by the white cap, which we have described as rising above the margin of the cell. The perfect whiteness partially disappears, and a moist, semi-transparent spot is observed on the centre. From this spot, first one mandible and then the other are soon seen projecting; and, by biting and scratching, the prisoner soon makes a hole large enough for its escape; and out comes a poor, sodden-looking wasp, which, in a few hours, cannot be distinguished from the rest of its companions. The cell from which the insect has just emerged must not be regarded as at once ready for a new tenant; for the original occupant often returns to it, for a day or two, as a temporary harbour of refuge.

Nothing has as yet been said regarding the length of time which the young wasp spends in its different phases of development. According to Professor Owen, the larva is hatched eight days after oviposition (the insertion of the egg in the cell); it grows to its full size in twelve to fourteen days; then opens its delicate hood, casts its integument—which has grown with its growth

from the time of quitting the egg—and, after a passive pupal state of ten days, emerges a perfect insect. Müller's hornets were five days in the egg, nine days in the larval and thirteen in the pupal state. Probably there is no definite time for these stages, the periods being hastened or retarded, within certain limits, by the condition of the seasons.

This view is confirmed by the fact, observed by Mr. F. Smith, that female wasps, if hatched early in the year, may lay their eggs the same autumn; while, if the season be unfavourable, they do not build nests or lay their eggs until the following year.

"The life of a wasp," says their latest historian, "is by no means monotonous; even in her cradle, her future character is foreshadowed by the sharp mandibles with which the larva is supplied, and the courage with which she ventures on the dangerous journey up the walls of the cell. Her duties are very various: each period of her life has its special duties, adapted to her condition. The relation in which the mother wasp stands to the swarm is peculiar. She differs from the queen bee in being to the others their mother rather than their queen. Her history is very like that of the workers in its general outline: like her they build, collect food, and tend the larvæ; and like her, only under very peculiar circumstances, they lay eggs. The first change that comes over the mother wasp is her ceasing to make paper. This faculty, probably depending on the activity of the salivary glands, seems to be given to her, as to the workers, only for a definite period. By this time the worker brood has begun to appear, and they relieve her of this part of her task, and of the daily increasing labour of feeding the larvæ. She restricts herself henceforth to her purely maternal duty of laying eggs, and now rarely leaves the interior of the nest. Brood after brood successively undertake the task of building, replacing the older wasps, which, with advancing age, become incapable of making paper. Thus, a constant system of promotion is going on: those which have no longer the faculty of house-making betake themselves to the duties of house-keeping; and, while the large young wasps, in full glandular vigour, maintain and enlarge the nest, the older shrunken wasps find full employment in satisfying the hungry mouths which peer out from the lower surface of the comb" (Ormerod, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-2).

THE MORTIMERS:

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK IV.—CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH CAMPBELL POINTS OUT SOMETHING FRESH.

A WAY from the crowd and dust of the racecourse, out of the track of the lines of vehicles that were leaving the Downs in various directions and by several roads, Erle led Campbell. On the Madingley side, the Downs were shut in and sheltered by a line of hills with little pretension to height or grandeur. They were covered with soft and mossy verdure, and their slopes were skirted by a plantation of firs. Through a path that led between two of the more considerable hillocks, the two friends wended their way, choosing a quiet bridle-path back to the Chase in preference to the ordinary carriage road.

The evening was charming.

"Let us sit here for a few minutes," said Erle, pointing out to Campbell a place where some trees had been recently felled, whose goodly stumps—still left in the ground—afforded a hard but not altogether uncomfortable seat.

"Shall we not be late for dinner if we loiter on our way?" said Campbell, with difficulty extricating a large silver watch from his fob, to which a broad, black watered riband, and three or four massive keys and seals, were attached.

Having at length, after three or four tugs, disengaged his chronometer, he announced to Erle that it was six o'clock.

"We have a few minutes to spare," said Erle; "we can take the nearest way home, which will be a mile or so less than the way we drove by this morning."

"Very well," said Campbell, "I am agreeable. You wish to ask me my opinion of the matters you wrote to me about in your last letter."

"I do wish to do so," replied Erle.

"And at this moment I very much wish you did not."

"Why, Campbell?"

"Imprimis, I am hot, and wish to cool myself; in the second place, the evening is lovely, and the view from this spot charming: I want to feast my eyes upon the landscape while I rest myself upon this stump of wood; and further—"

"You have not had time to consider," said Erle, interrupting his friend. "You have not given to the case I laid before you that quiet study and careful attention to the smallest matters of detail you like to give to everything before you express an opinion. Is not that so?"

"You have guessed the truth. It is so," replied Campbell, with one of those peculiar contortions of feature he was in the habit of putting on at certain times.

"You wait, as I suggested in my letter, to hold a conference with Lavelle, though possibly you doubt, as a staunch Protestant, the good that can arise from conferring with a priest and a Jesuit."

"Sir," said Campbell, "there you wrong me. You have never heard me say one disrespectful word of the professors and teachers of that ancient faith, which has for its adherents four-fifths of the Christian world. Your friend, the Jesuit, I have no doubt, is animated in all he does by motives as single of purpose and as sincere as those which move me. From all you have told me of him, I believe in his talent, and do not doubt his sincerity."

"Then why not enter into a discussion of the said matters at once?" demanded Erle.

"I wait for evidence," replied his friend, calmly. "I wait, also, for a more intimate knowledge of the case. I wait for information that your adopted father and the Jesuit, his friend, possess, in common with Robert Mortimer."

At the mention of the name of Mr. Robert Mortimer, Erle rose abruptly from his sitting posture, and leaned against one of the firs, savagely breaking off the slender twigs that were within his reach. Standing with his face half turned from Campbell, he said—

"Except for the regard I have for Sir Harold—I might almost say my love for him—and that I know my absence from Madingley would be a source of great inconvenience and discomfort to him, I would stay no longer at the Chase."

"I am to blame for your coming," said Campbell; "but I did not know then what I know now."

"What do you know now?" demanded the young man, almost fiercely. "For God's sake, stand on no idle ceremony. Don't think you spare my feelings by hiding anything from me. Speak out."

"Be patient, my dear boy," urged Campbell.

"I cannot be patient," said Erle, quickly. "I am tortured and harassed by my suspicions. I am placed in an awful situation. Here I am living in the very family of the man who has done most to wrong me—who has fastened a foul blot on my name. Oh, God! I cannot be patient any longer."

"Erle, be like yourself," urged his friend, in an affectionate tone; "have patience yet a little while."

Erle's reply was a deep groan, fetched from the very depths of his soul.

"This much I will say now," continued Campbell. "The miniature you have in your possession—the portrait your mother wore round her neck—given to you when you were a child by the Jesuit, is not a likeness of Robert Mortimer."

Erle gave a startled bound; and stood, with eager gaze, directly before Campbell. He made no remark, but waited in wrapt attention for the other to proceed.

"Of the truth of this I am well assured. Had you carefully compared the picture with the supposed original, you would have seen a difference—"

"Caused by the lapse of years—the features are the same. Oh, my God!" he exclaimed, as he wiped the perspiration from his brow, on which the liquid beads stood thick, and trickled down his face.

"Not so. There is one great and decisive difference between the two—the work of nature and the work of art. But with the discovery of the coincidence of the two miniatures—the initials on the back of one, the other a family portrait of Sir Harold's—I am not surprised at the conclusion to which you jumped—"

"Tell me—this difference—what is it?" said Erle, in hoarse tones.

"It is in the eye, Erle," replied Campbell, with something like a hopeful, if not triumphant, smile. "The eye—a feature that no years can change, no age alter. The eyes of Sir Harold's half-brother are gray, cold, sharp, unpleasant eyes—those in the miniature are like your own, a hazel-brown."

"I never observed this before," said Erle; "but now you tell me of it, I know that it is so. Mr. Mortimer's eyes are sharp, gray eyes, as you say. But I do not think there is much in this discovery."

"Much!" replied Campbell; "all is in it.

The colour of the eye nothing but disease can change or alter. The miniature your mother wore—you possess—is no likeness of Robert Mortimer. Be perfectly sure of that."

"What then—"

"Then," continued Campbell; "then—why, then, light is breaking through the clouds. I can tell you no more. I will be obstinate in my Scotch reticence. I will tell you nothing more of what I conjecture, lest I should raise hopes that may be fragile as the rounds of a Jacob's ladder twisted in pretty coloured glass."

"Then I will press you no further," said Erle, satisfied that his friend knew more than he was disposed then to enter upon, and placing an entire, and not unwarranted, confidence in his penetration and sagacity.

"You will see Lavelle," he added, as they began their walk towards Madingley. "He will be in London again in the course of a few days, at most."

"When I leave the Chase," answered Campbell, "I go to London. Give me the Jesuit's address."

He took out a memorandum-book, and, at Erle's dictation, wrote down Lavelle's address.

"Close to the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. You will find it very easily when you get to Bartholomew-square. Anybody can show you where the Oratory is; and, once there, you will soon find Father Francis."

"Very good and very clear. I like to have an address written down in a business-like way, for my memory for names—whether of people or of places—never was very good."

Having made the entry entirely to his satisfaction, Mr. Campbell linked his arm in Erle's, and they walked on in the direction of the Chase.

As they turned a corner in one of the long, narrow lanes, with high hedges on each side, throwing a pleasant shade from the rays of a departing sun, they suddenly met a party returning from the Downs.

Erle, who was too much occupied by his own thoughts to be observant of what was going on around him, would have noticed nothing more than that two carriages were passing him in the narrow lane, had he not been aroused by the voice of Mr. Johnson, who, with Mr. Horatio Grobey for a companion on the box, was driving his party home in their waggonette.

"How are you, sir?" said the steward, politely turning to Erle. "Can we not give you a lift?" pointing to the second vehicle in the rear, in which there were two vacant seats.

"Who is it?" said Campbell aside to Erle.

"Sir Harold's steward," replied Erle.

"Mr. Campbell—Mr. Johnson."

The latter gentleman took off his hat and bowed very politely.

"Allow me to drive you as far as the park gates, sir," said the steward.

"Well, as these lanes are intolerably dusty, I think we will accept of your civil offer," said Campbell, making for the second vehicle.

"No, no, no; I protest!" exclaimed a lady, dressed in all the hues of a rainbow.

"This carriage, Mr. Erle, this carriage for you and your friend."

The voice was that of Miss Majorca Pring.

"Ivica, my dear, we will make room for Mr. Erle," said Miss Majorca.

And though Erle and Campbell were reluctant to disturb the ladies and be forced into the society of the voluble Miss Majorca, before they could prevent it, Miss Ivica Johnson—who made Erle a profound curtsey—and a young lady friend were seated in the second carriage, and Erle and Campbell were side by side on the seat of the waggonette, opposite Miss Pring.

"You have always promised to join our little circle for a social game of whist, Mr. Erle; and we should be delighted to see you. Promise me to come the day after to-morrow—now do say 'yes,' Mr. Erle."

Before they arrived at the gates of the Chase, Erle had yielded to the pressing entreaties of Miss Pring, and promised to go.

"There!" said the lady, when Miss Ivica had taken her seat, "Mr. Erle has promised to come to supper with us. There is your opportunity. I declare, if I were a girl, I would marry that young man myself; for he is the nicest and most agreeable person I ever met. And, Ivica, I give you fair warning, that if you don't set your cap at him I may do it myself—there, what do you think of that?"

Mr. Johnson on the box grumbled something that sounded like "fool" in the ears of Mr. Grobey, but it was lost upon the ladies in the back part of the carriage.

"You must be patient," said Campbell

to Erle, as they crossed the smooth lawn in front of the house.

"I will be patient," said Erle.

"Wait till you have heard from me. Stay with Sir Harold, and go on quietly in the performance of your duties, as if nothing had occurred to disturb your peace of mind afresh. Give no one reason to suspect that you have any cause for disquietude. Avoid Mr. Robert Mortimer; and, above all, do not give him the shadow of a chance of quarrelling with you."

"I will act as you advise," said Erle, as they entered the house together.

TABLE TALK.

"ESSAYS in Mosaic," the latest volume of the Bayard series, published by Messrs. Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, is an exquisite little book. The title conveys a good idea of the contents—when you know what they are. "Essays in Mosaic" contains the best thoughts of the wise, the witty, and the good, in ancient and modern times, though the moderns have the lion's share of the talk. Each of the essays—the book consists of fifteen—has several authors, whose thoughts upon the subjects treated of are admirably arranged and pieced together, with the name of the author under each of these "essays in little." The subjects treated upon are various. No. 1 is "The Art of Reading;" No. 15, "The Gospel of Rest." And between the first and the last are a number of dissertations—short, readable, and good—each comprising within its limits the sentiments of several great minds upon the particular matters of which it treats. We have the best things of Johnson, Mrs. Thrale, and Edmund Burke, Hazlitt and Coleridge, Carlyle and Ruskin, presented to us in the most enticing form. There can be no better book for our idle minutes than "Essays in Mosaic;" and, like all the books of the Bayard series, it is admirably printed on toned paper. In a word, it is a little *livre de luxe*, at the small cost of half-a-crown. The arrangement of so many and various scraps in one uniform and consistent whole reflects great credit upon the judgment and industry of the compiler, Mr. Thomas Ballantyne; while Mr. Hain Friswell's thoughtful and well-written preface serves as an appropriate introduction to this capital book of essays. We can cordially commend all the volumes

of the Bayard series, and certainly not the least deserving of our praise is "Essays in Mosaic."

"WRITTEN OUT" is a phrase of which it seems likely we shall soon hear the last—at least, in its application to popular authors. Indeed, the force of experience would lead us to believe that a man ought only to have one subject—we had almost said only one idea—and stick tightly to that, and never write about anything else. The success that has attended the creation of certain imaginary personages, and the exhibition of their sayings and doings under different and not very varied phases, leads us to this conclusion. "Artemus Ward" was a character new to fiction. The idea took; the public liked him; the showman's peculiar and witty language and notions "bit."—"Ladies and gentlemen, the show is about to commence. You could not well expect to go in without paying, but you may pay without going in. I can say no fairer than that." Since Artemus thus expressed his sentiments on the subject of paying, we have had a good many shows that their proprietors make pay. The *ci-devant* ecclesiastic whose fertile brain created Mrs. Brown finds plenty of readers, who are weekly entertained by the old lady's eccentricity of conduct and expression. At this rate Mrs. Brown seems likely to visit every part of the habitable globe, as she has gone the length of "descending the Splügen on a sledge." There are still many places to which her ingenious showman may take her. "Happy Thoughts," weekly papers which for a long period enlivened the columns of a contemporary, are now being followed by the "Boompje Papers," very evidently from the same pen—that of Mr. Burnand. Apparently, the "Papers" are to be very like the "Thoughts," and afford another illustration of the desirability of authors getting into one groove, and keeping therein ever after.

THE RUMOURED RECALL of the Hon. John Lothrop Motley, the representative of the United States in this country, suggests the thought that Congress might, before sending us another "minister," consider the propriety of changing the official title of their representative from "minister" to that of "ambassador." It is not becoming that the envoy sent to the Court of St. James's

from our opulent and powerful brethren across the Atlantic should take rank, on all occasions of State, after the representatives of several other countries of considerably less importance. Why will not Congress call its representative an ambassador? and so remove what more than one American Minister has been aggrieved at. They need not pay an ambassador any more. As it is, their ministers are generally men of private fortune. *Apropos* of American matters, a New York paper suggests that the admirers of Dickens in the States should buy Gadshill, and present it to the British nation, as a token of regard for the memory of the great writer of fiction. The lovers of Charles Dickens in this country would very readily subscribe a sum of money for the purchase of his late residence; but it is too early to make a show-place of Gadshill. In fifty years' time it may be done with propriety and grace.

THE HOT WEATHER has developed the smells in tunnels of the Underground Railway to an alarming extent. It is a duty to the public incumbent on the directors to do something in the way of better ventilation. Their own interests must suffer by the present state of their line. Between Baker-street and Farringdon-street stations the noxious gases and abominable sulphurous smells choke the passengers. More openings and shafts communicating with the air outside the tunnels might easily be made, and need not cost a very large sum of money. At present, the sensations produced upon the palate and throat by a ride between the stations above-mentioned have been happily likened to the result of sucking the tips of a box of brimstone matches. This ought not to be; as the proper ventilation of the tunnels is a very easy matter. Probably the directors do not use this part of their line much, or they would have removed the nuisance long ago.

MEDIÆVAL APPETITES might be made the subject of a smart essay. Something in this way has recently been done by a contributor to a journal partly devoted to the interests of gastronomy. The author of the article gives some extracts from a household book, or diary, written in the year 1523 by the Earl of Surrey. On the sixth day of August in that year the Earl dined with the

Countess in her chamber, as was his custom. The guests were:—

"The Dukys Grace of Norf, the Duches, my Lady Oxforth, my Lady Elisabeth, my yonge Lady, my yonge Lord, my Lady Wyndham."

And the following was the bill of fare served up for this aristocratic company:—

"Fyrste cowrse:—ij capons bowled, and a breste of mutton and a peyse of beyf, vij chevetts, a swane, a pygge, a breste of veyle, ij capons rost, a custerde. Seconde cowrse:—iiij messe of morts, vj checkyns, viij pigeons, iij connes, ij shovellers, iiij sepyes, j dos quals, ij pastys of vennyson, a tarte, notts and peres. To the bordshend:—A capon bowled, ij rebbs of beyf, a swane, v chevetts, a breste of veyle, a capon rost, a custerde. The seconde cowrse:—iiij checkyns, ij connes, vj pegeons, vj qualys, a pasty of vennyson, a tarte, notts and peres."

At one of the tables the servants all dined. The fare provided by the Earl's cooks was, as is attested by the list given, of a very substantial sort. There is, in the same diary, an entry of a breakfast served up on the twenty-fourth day of October in the same year, as follows:—

"To my Lady and my Lady Wyndham, a peyse of beyf, a gooysse, a breste of veyle rost, a capon."

Upon this our contemporary, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, remarks, in a note upon "daring diners":—

"Few ladies could manage as much now; but, after all, it is perhaps fortunate, as ladies' appetites for dress and other expensive things have not abated, so that they can no longer consume a piece of beef, a goose, a breast of roast veal, and a capon—just for breakfast!"

This strikes us as being a very unfair attack upon the Countess of Surrey and Lady Wyndham. No doubt exists in our mind that these noble dames were blessed both with good appetites and good digestion; but what was left would help us as much to a conclusion of the amount of food consumed as a statement of what was sent up to them. It was the fashion of the age to load the table with solid and substantial dishes; but we shrewdly suspect the appetites of ladies three hundred and fifty years ago were not so very much better than they are now.

A CORRESPONDENT: In the interesting article on the "Fessen-Penny," which appeared in the June number of ONCE A WEEK, it seems to me that the author has not accurately defined the term "handfasting" as "taking a wife on trial for

a twelvemonth," the offspring of this union being considered legitimate. Jamieson, in his "Scottish Dictionary," thus explains handfasting:—"Marriage, with the incumbance of some canonical impediment, not yet bought off." It seems to me, therefore, to imply—1. The intention of a life-long union in wedlock; 2. The existence of some formal impediment, of the future removal of which the betrothed persons have assured themselves. I am not prepared to contradict the author's statement that "handfasting," according to his view of it, was anciently prevalent in Scotland; if it were, it surely must have been owing to popular abuse, not to legal sanction. The example, however, which he quotes, viz., the union of Robert I. and Elizabeth Muir, is not apposite. Their eldest son, though born out of wedlock, did not succeed to the throne as the offspring of an anomalous kind of union, like that described by your contributor; but because, by the future marriage of his parents, he became, according to Roman civil law, legitimated; and also, because there was a special settlement of the Crown in his favour, made by the Estates of Scotland. My authority for this statement is Sir Harris Nicholas, an eminent lawyer, in his "History of the Earldoms of Strathearn, Monteith, and Airth," in which he was led to enter fully into the history of the first Stuart king.

MR. ERNEST EDWARDS has invented a miniature photographic apparatus, which has been improved by Messrs. Murray and Heath, of Jermyn-street. It will be a boon to tourists; for it can be carried in the pocket, or slung round the shoulders in a small portable case, while the necessary stand will fold up into a staff or alpenstock. The outside size of the camera is only $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the plates being $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. They are all ready prepared for views, and will keep until the traveller's return home, when they can be developed and printed by himself, or by a professional photographer; who, also, if it is desired, can enlarge the small negative to any size. The $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch negative has been enlarged to 24 by 19 inches with great success.

An Illustration, printed separately on Toned Paper, is published with the present Weekly Number.

THE DEATH OF KING JOHN, a Poem, by LITCHFIELD MOSELEY, written for and read by MR. BELLEW, will appear in our next Number.

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CHAPTER XXXVII.



WE

HAD left Mr. Benbow in his castle, somewhat cheered as he saw that the clouds were breaking, and prepared to exert himself calmly to prevent these terrible dangers overtaking him. As

soon as he had arranged his more pressing affairs, he felt he must go straight to town, and see his son and daughter. His son was ill, so paternal anxiety might be a very justifiable excuse. He started, found out their house; and, shown into the drawing-room, was presently confronted by the cold gaze of his daughter-in-law, Lady Rosa. It was the first time they had met for a long time, and he felt not a little nervous. Her stern face, as she stood before him, disquieted him not a little.

"I am glad you have come," she said. "It is high time that all these strange proceedings, which are getting to be the talk of the world, should be explained. Sit down, and tell me calmly all from the beginning. You must see yourself, as a man

of the world, that things cannot stay as they are. They must be explained; or, if explanation is refused, there must be investigation."

Mr. Benbow laughed.

"My dear Rosa, don't humiliate me more than you can help. I would forget all that is past, if I could; but I have explained the whole to the Duke already. It would be painful to me to go over it again. Have indulgence for this wild folly, which, I can tell you, is at an end, and shall never recur again."

"I don't understand," she said, coldly. "Again I ask for an explanation why you tried to prevent our coming to my father's house."

"Don't—don't, please! I am ashamed. It was but a temporary weakness. And my son, too—what would he think of his father?"

"O, he shall not know, that I engage. He knows nothing at this moment."

Mr. Benbow's shrewd eyes twinkled. This was a relief, and at the same time a hold over her. She was as afraid as he was lest her husband should come in contact with the charms of this siren, and revive the old attachment under far more dangerous conditions.

"If you *must* know," he said, "then you must both know. I would prefer having you for a confidant, though my son might judge me less harshly. But you, my dear Lady Rosa, with your penetration and tact, you can see how this is. It was a temporary infatuation, and it only required a little strength of mind to overcome it. It will all end now; for, thank Heaven, the temptation will be removed. The broad Atlantic will be between me and it."

He looked at her steadily, to see the effect. She looked back at him as steadily. She felt she was not a match for him.

"This explanation," she said, slowly, "does not quite fit with the impressions of

others. There are some who say that your behaviour was more that of a man with some terrible family secret, which he was afraid of having disclosed."

"Who says so? Who dares to say so?" he said, furiously. "I have had too much of this, Lady Rosa—first from your father, now from you. Suspicious looks—doubts—called on to account, to explain! I'll have no more. I'm weary of it. Find out for yourself this terrible family secret, if you wish it—if you can! I have trailed myself in the dust before you—exposed a weakness unbecoming my age and character—and you want more! I'll not give it! There! Find it out for yourself!"

She looked at him with surprise. This warmth, it seemed to him, quite staggered her, and made her ashamed of such suspicions. She seemed convinced by his earnestness, and remained silent.

Again Mr. Benbow had played well. His old cunning had returned. He rose up.

"Now," he said, "let me see Charles. I understand quite. He must know nothing, of course."

Mr. Benbow then went in; saw his son, who was still a little weak; talked to him, and made him accept his views, whatever they were. Finally, he departed triumphant, and happier than he had felt for a long time. Difficulties were disappearing. The Sword had become almost imperceptible.

When he had reached home, there was a grand dinner, to which he was repairing at a neighbouring lord's, and where he was made exceeding much of—flattered, courted, listened to deferentially, consulted. Then he came home, and there found a letter waiting for him, the handwriting of which he well knew. It seemed to awaken and startle him—her handwriting! Its contents startled him still more:—

"I decline your offers. I have received an engagement at a great London theatre. The chance I have long been waiting for has arrived at last. The world shall now hear of me, and I shall take care that all London rings with my name. Under other circumstances I might have complied with your wishes, or accepted your offer. But this makes it impossible. So I give you timely warning. This day week I come before the public in my old character of Pauline. "LYDIA EFFINGHAM."

For a long time he sat staring at the

paper, as if it were a death warrant. Gradually his face sank—sank slowly. In a few moments, the whole confidence and elation which had lately played in his face had gradually disappeared, and had given place to a look that seemed one of hopeless agony and despair. It was no use resisting—no use struggling to repair losses. Any barriers he set up were swept away like something set up to check a torrent. It was all over, and he had best submit. He should never make the slightest exertion more to stay the march of destiny. As he thought, there was the flash over his head—in his eyes—and the terrible Sword waving furiously! Let it fall upon his head—better and more welcome now than later!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WITH the next day, however, he was in town again, drawn there by the morbid restlessness which brought back Sikes to London. The whole day he went about the streets; and shopkeepers, policemen, lawyers, noticed the wild, incoherent man, now ~~posting~~ ^{glaring} along, now lingering vacantly, now ~~glaring~~ ^{glaring} furiously; and looked after him as he ~~passed~~ ^{passed} them, wondering. At every one of those boards he stopped and studied. He devoured all the notices in the papers, but could find nothing.

At last he entered one of those half music shops where ~~boxes~~ ^{boxes} for operas and theatres are let; and the owner, obsequiously bending and offering his service, was not a little taken back by the manner and the almost fierceness of the wild-looking gentleman who sought his assistance.

"I want to find out a new actress," he said, "who is to appear next week at some of these theatres. I have hunted all day; but I *must* find her."

"What was the lady's name?"

Mr. Benbow almost glared at him suspiciously. There was no need to tell that. Surely he must know of such an event as a new and beautiful actress coming forward!

"Well," said the agent, "that is now so common. There are three or four at this moment coming forward; in fact, if we trust the papers or the managers, every new actress is beautiful."

"Well, there is one; and it is your business to know."

"Stay," said an assistant in the shop, to his principal; "there was some announcement at the foot of Fowler's bill."

And, going out, he brought in one of the boards which recline languidly at the doors of such places, and on which was set out the programme of the Royal Duchess Theatre, on which were the usual self-commendations:—"Glorious unabated success! Fiftieth night of 'On the Boards,' pronounced by the united London press to be the grandest triumph of realism ever yet attempted at any theatre! A real four-in-hand driven across the stage!"

The assistant was reading through all this with a secret unction, glad of the excuse, when he was interrupted impatiently by Mr. Benbow:—

"Miss Elphinstone, the Cleopatra-actress, will make her first appearance in a play specially suited to her attractions and gifts, entitled 'The Lady of Lyons.'"

Elphinstone! What did this mean? This was not the name so terrible to him; yet a strange and infallible instinct seemed to proclaim to him that there was another name here, under this disguise. Still, though, it was a shelter, a protection. He might again escape. Who knew her in that great city? Who knew of that obscure playhouse? He was intensely relieved; but, still, what was he to do? Go to her? Never! He would not humble himself before her any more. No; he should leave her to work out the black villainy; he could not trust himself near her, lest he should be tempted to crush or stamp upon her, as he would upon some noxious beetle. But, then, there was one politic course before him—to keep jealous watch over his son, and interpose when danger came. The engagement, he discovered, was to last but a fortnight; if he could tide over *that!* A plan, indeed, occurred to him: that he might seek the manager, and artfully put before him arguments that would make him dismiss her. But he had had a lesson already as to the danger of that.

He went to his son's, and found him much recovered and sitting up in the drawing-room; and, with a smiling, airy way, greeted him. He was so enchanted to see him recovering. He was coming to stay in town for a week or so, and would they put him up? He might help him, too. Charles was a good and affectionate son, after all; and this austerity of his wife was a little chilling to him; so he welcomed this proposal with true ardour.

Lady Rosa, when she entered and was told of it, looked at him searchingly, as who should say—"What plot, or 'game,' is this, now?" But she made no objection. It would be hard, indeed, to discover any signs of such in Mr. Benbow's manner or bearing, for nothing could be more free, or less constrained, than his present temper. He seemed determined to remove all impression of his previous strange conduct; and he almost succeeded, even with her.

All this time, however, as he walked through the London streets, that Sword was waving away furiously over his head; nay, to him it seemed to be swinging in his very heart—flying backwards and forwards, cutting and slashing him as it flew. He had found out the obscure theatre, which was not so wholly obscure as he hoped; and he hovered about its dark, cavern-looking stage-door, drawn by an irresistible fascination. To his family he was out "on business;" but that was nearly the whole business that detained him. It was a strange spectacle to see—as some of the grimy supers did—that peering, wild-looking gentleman hovering about the place; affecting to be passing by accident, "hanging about;" and, at last, standing in a shop which commanded a view of it, and from whose door peered out that anxious face again.

While he stayed with his son, the days dragging by wearily, that old feeling which had grown up between them—and especially between him and Lady Rosa—was passing away gradually. They were beginning to be persuaded that it was "only a little overstraining of the mind;" and, indeed, this view was confirmed by the great fashionable doctor, who dined a great deal among political and literary men, and knew well the peculiar shapes of "break-down" to which they were subject. But, as even the best motives have a certain earthy sediment, there might have been something else which had to do with this complacent condonation on the part of his family. And this was what Mr. Benbow told his son, that he was now working for *him*, and that one darling scheme remained to be worked out. Father and son were sitting together, and the former spoke very tenderly and sorrowfully.

"I feel quite worn out," he said. "As you know, all my life has been one weary struggle. Even machinery gets worn out, and now I find every day I more and more want spring. It is time for me, I am sure."

"My dear father, why do you talk in this desponding way? You have many years before you."

"Ah! last year. Yes. But it has all gone since then. Since then I seem to have lost everything—hope, enjoyment of the world, everything. However, if I can but live to get what has been promised to me, and what is my right—that is, to get it for you—I shall be content."

"A peerage!" said Charles.

"You think it a dream. No; it will take some little time still; but it shall be done. And now, my dearest boy—for whom I have worked and slaved all my life—in return for all this, you could not think ill of me; you could not suppose—as was hinted to me some time ago—that I would have done anything from base motives; and if there be any act of mine that should look a little doubtful, you will set it down to the best motives—and to that best of motives, your happiness. Even men like prime ministers—the most leading persons of the State—who have had a career, even these must have passages they would not quite like to look back to, but would rather forget."

"To be sure, father. I quite understand that. Even in this election of mine, there were things I said—and, possibly, did too—which I am not very proud of."

"Exactly!" said the father, eagerly. "And where there are enemies—bitter, unscrupulous enemies—such as I have had; people that have laid themselves out during their whole life to harass and hunt a man—it is no wonder if he be strange in manner or odd. But never mind. Now, dear Charles, I have my whole thought on this one point, and you shall live and die a peer; and I shall make you a promise about it: that you shall wear the coronet soon. *I have too much weight as it is on this forehead.*"

He said this so piteously that his son was quite touched; but these brilliant prospects dazzled him, as, perhaps, the father intended they should.

SOCIAL GRIEVANCES.—No. II.

WEDDINGS AND THEIR BREAKFASTS.

A FRIEND of mine was once asked which he preferred, weddings or funerals? To everybody's astonishment he answered funerals; and, on being pressed for his reason, he observed—

"The food is always so much better."

I do not go quite so far as my friend. It is better to have nothing to do with either; they are both dreary enough. Let us consider, as calmly as we can, the ordinary proceedings at a wedding.

We will begin at the precise moment you hear of their engagement. You have long suspected something was going on. Edwin has not been dining at his club so often lately, and when he does, arrives at half-past seven and leaves at nine. The bouquet in his coat is rather flattened, as if something had been squeezed against it. He is *dis-trait*, and prefers the quiet of the library to the joviality of the smoking-room. A brand-new locket dangles at his chain; and when you address him he always seems afraid lest you should ask him where he got it from. At last, he can't contain himself—the friend of your bosom unbosoms himself; he wrings your hand, and says, sententiously,

"Of course, I know it's a serious business, and very often a mere lottery; but my Angelina and I have had so many opportunities of knowing each other, that we cannot well have made a mistake." (This is, of course, what they all think, till the tenth day of the honeymoon and the cause list in my Lord Penzance's Court undeceive them.) "We are to be married on the 12th. You will get your invitation in a day or two, and mind you come."

This is the moment that fills me with rage and despair. You congratulate him mechanically, while you are inwardly pondering what is the least sum you can with decency expend in selecting a present—that dreadful tax, even on rich pockets. Why should it exist at all? If the young people can't afford to provide themselves with the necessary frivolities of life, why do they marry? If I may present a fish slice, why not a soup ladle, or copper saucepan, or bottle jack? Or, if you will, let the *trousseau* be subscribed for amongst the friends. Let Brown give a bonnet, Jones a dress, and Robinson a night-cap; and so on. You may not know Angelina, perhaps; but, depend upon it, if you don't press something choice on her acceptance before her marriage, it will be seldom you partake of her little dinners afterwards.

Then comes the absurd announcement in the fashionable paper:—

"We hear that a matrimonial alliance is on the tapis, between a gentleman of great

wealth, commercially connected with one of the largest manufacturers of the favourite beverage of the people, and the lovely and accomplished daughter of a gallant nobleman who, in the Crimean war, emulated the deeds of his ancestors at Poitiers and Cressy."

And every one is supposed to infer at once from the above that young Grains is going to be married to the daughter of Lord Desabre, who was in the Balaklava charge.

I have attended many weddings of friends and relatives—including my own; and I have come to the conclusion that the most miserable day of a man's life is that preceding his wedding day. "The last day of a bachelor" would afford nearly as terrible a narrative as that of Victor Hugo's condemned one. He dares not go to his club for fear of being chaffed. He does not like to go to see his Angelina; or, if he does, only stays a few minutes, as she, of course, is employed in packing up, with her dress, with preparations for the breakfast, or in conversation with Gunter's head man, who has hardly been out of the house for a week. This gentleman has a strong affinity with the mournful person who will attend to take instructions some day as to the suitable disposal of the remains of the bride of to-morrow. For, as nothing is impossible to Gunter in his line, so will that bland person, while showing by his manner and voice that he deeply sympathizes with the bereaved ones, at the same time almost make you believe that he can command as eligible a nook for the defunct in a future state as he has in the neighbouring cemetery.

Well, the happy man, left to his own devices, vainly seeks how to get through the rest of the day. He goes to his lodgings and tries to read a book. That won't do. Then he enters into further calculations, whether the eight hundred will be sufficient to start with. The results are not quite satisfactory. He does not now quite see his way to the pony carriage. That was a disagreeable affair when he was with the reading party; but, of course, she'll never hear of it. He makes up his mind to go out of town for the rest of the day, and selects some quiet spot on the Thames, where there is a snug inn, and a good dinner to be got. He arrives, and finds that Lady Pump is holding her annual boating party there.

"Dear, dear! who'd have thought of

seeing you to-day?" says her amiable ladyship. "Not running away from to-morrow, I hope? Ha! ha!"

He flies back to town and takes a solitary meal in a dingy chop-house. He returns home, and, in desperation, takes to smoking and brandy and water, till he is sufficiently stupefied to go to sleep; and wakes the next morning to his happiness, with a thundering headache and a tongue as big as an ox's. But the happy moment is approaching, and he proceeds to array himself in his new toggery. The eternal blue frock coat—which he will never wear again—the white waistcoat, and the French gray et ceteras; the flower in the button-hole; the lemon-coloured gloves; and the new hat from Melton's. Breakfast is impossible: he would like to have a brandy and soda, but somehow he does not feel it would be quite correct. The coming events of married life have already begun to cast their shadows before.

The man undoubtedly gets the worst of it all through. The whole object of the ceremony appears to be to make him look contemptible. He enters the church, accompanied by one or two friends, and stands up at the altar to be stared at by the crowd. Antinous himself would appear to disadvantage under such circumstances. Why on earth can't the bride and bridegroom walk in together, as seems to be the most natural proceeding?

When the service is over, then begins the dreariness of the day. It is just twelve o'clock, and Gunter won't be ready till two. What are you to do? And here the ingratitude of the bridegroom manifests itself. "Just go and see after the carriage!" are the last words he addresses to you, and completely ignores your presence for the rest of the day. Is it possible, you ask yourself, that this is the beginning of the end of your friendship? It may be; silly women are always jealous of their husband's friends. Stupid things! *Sua si bona norint!*

While we are waiting for breakfast, I will relate, *apropos* of this subject, a little adventure which happened to a friend of mine, not a hundred yards from the place where I am writing. He went down to stay in the country with a friend of his, who had been married six months, whose best man he had been at his wedding, and whose bridesmaids he had favourably impressed by one of the most elegant speeches in their behalf they had ever heard. Well, directly he arrived,

he was much astonished at the rather cool reception he received from the lady. His friend was all that could be desired; but it was evident she cast the eye of suspicion on him, and that he was anything but welcome. It was in the winter time, too, and there was no fire in the bed-room. Evidently he was to be starved out. My friend is a man of resources, and won't stand any nonsense. He rang the bell, and told the servant to light the fire. The servant was very sorry, but missus had given orders that no fire was to be lit in that room, as the chimney hadn't been swept for months. Oh, oh! He went to the top of the stairs, and bawled out at the top of his voice for Jones. Jones came running up, and my friend, no doubt rightly suspecting that Mrs. Jones would be listening on the staircase, took Jones to task.

"I say, old fellow! This won't do, you know! I must have a fire! Can't you give me another room, or send for the sweep?"

"Of course, my boy! My missus must have made a mistake. Here, Susan, move Mr. Brown's things into the green room."

"Adolphus!" cried the shrill voice of Mrs. Jones up the stairs, "Mr. Brown can't have the green room. Mamma comes here this week, you know, and I am keeping the room for her."

"Oh, never mind mamma!" said Jones; "she can have this room, and we'll have the sweeps in to-morrow."

Mrs. Jones, though beaten for the time, retreated in order before the enemy, firing off little sobs, which certainly took effect, for Jones scuffled after her, evidently alarmed.

At dinner the same sort of thing occurred. Jones was subdued, and his wife was as cold as Brown's room was before he changed it. When the game period arrived, Jones remarked:—

"Old man, you're very fond of landrail, aint you?"

Brown replied, with unimpeachable veracity, that he was.

"See, my dear," said Jones to his wife, "that Brown has landrail every day he is here."

Whereupon Mrs. Jones burst into tears, and left the room.

The next morning, after breakfast, Jones proposed to take Brown up to the home farm. A plague on all honest fellows, I say, who will take you to see their short-

horns and Alderneys, and pigs, and cocks and hens, when you only care for those animals when they appear upon the table!

The dogcart was at the door, and they were putting on their coats, when Mrs. Jones appeared again, in tears, and throwing her arms round her husband, sobbed out—

"Oh, Adolphus! you never cared to go before without me, and why should strangers separate us? Boo—hoo-oo-oo!"

This was too much for Brown. He requested Jones to keep the dogcart for a quarter of an hour, and packed up his things, and requested to be driven to the station. He saluted husband and wife in this manner:—

"Good bye, Jones. I certainly never thought *your* wife would turn me out of the house! Madam, you have won the day, and I congratulate you on your victory; but let me remind you, there are victories which are worse than defeats. If we ever meet again, I hope you will have learnt by that time that no woman is ever so charming or so popular as when she accepts her husband's old friends as her own."

They did meet two or three years afterwards, and Mrs. Jones very gracefully acknowledged she had been wrong, but pleaded affection for her husband. Brown was easily appeased, and has as many landrails as he likes when he stays there.

But we will just glance at the presents. There they are, a table-load of useless things! See old Screwington sidling off as we enter. He hasn't given the bride anything, not even his blessing. What a lot of fans! A sovereign will purchase a very effective instrument of that kind. For my part, I should have preferred every friend I had in the world giving me three dozen of wine. When I married, my friend Lackington said, "I am going to give you a present;" but he never went so far. When *he* was going to be married he said, "I owe you a wedding present; don't give me one, and we shall be quits."

I did not wish to hurt his feelings, so refrained from mentioning it would not be quits, as I had never intended to give him one.

Well, here's breakfast announced at last! There is such a crowd, you can't get near the bridesmaid on whom you had set your eyes and heart. There are at least a hundred people, and there is room for twenty-five

comfortably. Screwington, who has been lurking by the dining-room door, the moment it is opened rushes up to the top of the room, where, the others following him, he is obliged to remain, as no one could expect him to return through the crowd. Being there, he may just as well sit down and take his food, which he does, regardless of the scowls of chairless dowagers. It will, perhaps, puzzle my readers when I tell them that, though a married man, I never had an opportunity of knowing what the bride and bridegroom say to each other during this meal. Patience! and, perhaps, some day I will account for my own case. I have been best man on four or five occasions, and have, therefore, always sat next to the bride or bridegroom, but never could surprise any words between them. There was a perpetual *roucoulement* going on, and a tidy amount of champagne; but their thoughts were too deep for words—or was it that the bridegroom was thinking of that speech he would be called upon shortly to make? His time is approaching. The friend of the family has already given some portentous grunts as throat-clearers, and puffs and snorts, as Vesuvius rumbles and smokes before an eruption. His wrinkled old face is as red as if currant jelly had been poured into the interstices; and his white waistcoat, falling like an avalanche on his ample paunch, shows by the yawning of its crevasses that its owner is ready. Up he gets, and *flobbers* out a few incoherent sentences. (There is no such verb as *flobber* in the English language, but confess it is admirably calculated to express the indistinct but verbose pomposities of an old buck.)

“Ladies and thelemen, the timeth arrived; duty wolthed pun me, pothe helth o’ the bwide and” (with a tremendous jerk and bob) “bwithegwum.”

Of course I am not going to inflict that sort of eloquence upon you, and merely introduce the above specimen as a justification for my inventing a new word. But should you say that that style of rhetoric is so affecting that, by the time he has got to “bwithegwum,” half the women are in tears? Will you explain that, my friend? Did you ever dare to ask yourself why there are more tears shed at one wedding than at half a dozen funerals? Because there is a life that is worse than death; because half these women weeping there—call it sympathy for the bride if you like—are recalling the day,

years ago, when they started on the same voyage with as fair a wind, and the same joyous hopes and fears, and—but “*Non hæc jocosæ conveniunt lyre;*” and, while I am writing, the strains of the “*Marche aux Flambeaux,*” performed by my wife—shortly to be succeeded, I fear, by my eldest daughter practising her scales—remind me that, at all events, there are some happy marriages in this world; and that those which are unhappy, thank heaven, don’t concern me!

Now comes the bridegroom’s turn to address the company, and a very painful position he is in. I dare say you young bridesmaids, flirting and giggling yonder, do not appreciate it. It is the first time he has had to make an ass of himself before the girl he adores. Demosthenes himself could hardly have acquitted himself creditably. What is he to say? What can he say? Why, nothing, but what he always does say: that he is fond of his wife, and that that is the reason he married her; that he is sure he does not deserve the fulsome compliments paid him by the friend of the family—as, of course, he doesn’t—and that he hopes, by constant attention to his dear wife, to merit the continued support—here he is suddenly overwhelmed with confusion, as he thinks that last sentence sounds very much like a passage in a circular he has received from his tailor that morning—he flounders, hesitates, is lost, and sits down disgusted with himself, and hardly dares look Angelina in the face. But he is roused presently by hearing roars of laughter and clapping of hands. A graceful young barrister—I think I said above I had four or five times been groomsman—is returning health for the bridesmaids. He is identifying himself with them; and the audacious manner in which we are talking, dries all the tears, and puts every one in good humour. Edwin hates him cordially for the agreeable contrast to his own breakdown. Never mind, it’s all over. Hurrah! Three cheers! And again. God bless the pretty bride, and joy and slippers go with her! And mind you write and say how you like Sugarloaf Cottage. And just one more, dear mamma; and crack goes the postillion’s whip, and “They’re off!” cries a guest, as they cry at Epsom. Let us hope they will come safely round the corner, keep their legs as they are going down hill, and win the matrimonial stakes by several lengths in the commonest of canters. Bang guns! Ring out

bells! Cheer tenants! Oh, rapture! Let us be jolly! Now then!

Yes, exactly. Now then, indeed! What then? It is only four o'clock: you don't dine till half-past eight, and you have drunk more champagne than is good for you. I don't mean that you are intoxicated, or in any way approaching to it. But half a glass of champagne is more than is good for anybody in the middle of the day. That tree looks inviting for a cigar. How confoundedly hot it is! Let us repose. Give me a light, and I'll tell you the story of my marriage, as I promised you. Puff—puff—puff—yawn. Well, it was about—puff—pu—ff—SNORE.

THE DEATH OF KING JOHN.

BY LITCHFIELD MOSELEY.*

TIS evening, and the ancient towers of Swin-stead Abbey lie
In calm, majestic stateliness, beneath the pale moon's
ray.

On a low couch, a stricken man rests under yonder
trees,
And monks and abbot vainly strive the suff'rer's
pain to ease.

The torchlight throws a lurid glare those deathlike
features o'er;
A sceptre lies beside the hand that ne'er may grasp
it more;
And royal robes the litter deck, and jewels rich and
rare,
Gleam from yon crown-encircled casque, with fitful
radiance there.

The suffering, weak, and helpless form, that racked
with anguish, lies
On that low couch, is England's lord, King John,
whose restless eyes
Are for a moment closed in sleep; but, ere the night
is o'er,
His throne will be another's, and his place know
him no more.

The fight has gone against his arms: upon the field
to-day,
Defeated, borne down, overcome, his soldiers fled
away.

And yet unwounded he has been, no sword has
harmed the King—
A treacherous hand has laid him low, with poison's
subtle sting.

He wakes—the dying monarch wakes! and fiercely
gleam his eyes
With wild and feverish brilliancy; and see, he vainly
tries
To raise himself upon his arm—too weak to bear
him now;
While cold big drops of agony bedew his aching brow.

"Fall back, fall back, ye shaveling monks! Ah!
wherefore rest I here?
How goes the battle, Hubert?—say! Alas! your
words I fear!

Oh! tell me not the day is lost—it must not, shall
not be!

Give me my armour, helm, and shield—and, Hubert,
follow me!

"Good Hubert, prithee answer me—Why stands
young Arthur there?

It was not I who murdered him! In that I had no
share!

"Twas you who did the guilty deed. Let him not
blast my sight!

Oh! shield me from his cruel glare, which chills my
soul with fright!

"I choke! A cup of water—quick! for I am
parched with thirst!

Oh! may the slave who poisoned me be evermore
accurs!

My veins are filled with molten lead—my vitals seem
on fire!

I scorch with heat, and all my frame is racked with
anguish dire!

"Oh, God!—to think that I, a King, should suffer
torment so!

A thousand shadows 'fore mine eyes are passing to
and fro.

Back—back! ye fierce, accusing sprites! your fiend-
like mockery cease.

By all the demons ye obey, leave me to die in peace!

"Away!—nor press so round my couch! I'm
choking!—give me air!

I cannot breathe! Again I see young Arthur stand-
ing there!

I see again the golden curls, again the boyish face.
Oh, Arthur! torture me no more! Spare me, for
love of grace!

"Brave Falconbridge, my trusty friend, I'm glad
that you are here;

I am forsaken now; save you, there's none but
Hubert near.

Of all the fawning sycophants who basked around
my throne,

Not one remains to tend on me—the cormorants
have flown.

"What sound was that? The battle call! You
shall not hold me down!

My strength returns to me again. What, ho! my
sword and crown!

Full soon shall yonder traitors fly, like chaff before
the gale.

Stand back!—nor dare to hinder me! The King
shall yet prevail!

"Are ye, too, leagued to baffle me? Alas! I can-
not stand;

This arm of mine is powerless now to grasp the
warlike brand;

My limbs refuse to bear me up, and I am faint and
weak;

My brain seems whirling round and round—I—I
can scarcely speak!

"A strange, cold numbness seizes me. How thick
the air has grown!

A mistiness obscures my sight. I dare not die
alone!

Then grasp my hand, that I may know that ye are
standing by.

Again the poison tears my frame! 'Tis o'er! I
faint!—I die!"

* As read by Mr. J. M. Bellew.

THE MORTIMERS :

A NOVEL WITH TWO HEROES.

By the EDITOR.

BOOK IV.—CHAPTER VIII.

THE FAMILY ALONE.

THE splendid fortunes of the Duke on the turf had reached their zenith at the great meeting that had immediately preceded the aristocratic *rèunion* on Malton Downs. On his own ground, in his native county, with the eyes of all his Berkshire friends upon him, with his horses running with their heads turned towards their own stables, the tide of luck had set against him. He was the "lucky Duke" no longer. Dame Fortune—like a sorry and flighty jade as she is—had jilted him. Time after time and race after race, he saw his horses lose; and prize after prize that he had counted his own slipped from his grasp, and was secured by his more fortunate rivals. Sometimes he was, as he expressed it, "done by a head," and no more. On other occasions he was, to use his own words, "out of it altogether." As is usual with noble owners under such trying circumstances, he asked an explanation of his trainer. Johnny Butler raised his eyebrows, and shook his sagacious little bullet head.

"You aint done so bad, your Grace—not when you come to think on it—now, have you?"

"Not done amiss, Johnny!" demanded his noble patron in astonishment, and speaking in his quick, impulsive way. "Not done badly! Why, I've lost—'gad, I don't know what I *have* lost on the week. I dare not add my book up to see. There, Butler—that's the long and the short of it."

"Your horses haven't run so badly, your Grace. We've been secont a good many times, and some days and some weeks, and, for the matter of that, some years too, you can't get no nearer."

"That doesn't help me, though, Johnny. I tell you what it is," said Fairholme, turning sharply round; "you'll have to improve on this. I must win a few good stakes, or I don't know where we shall be, either you or I."

"So you will, your Grace—so you will," said the politic trainer, in his most soothing accents. "You'll pull off a good handicap or two, likely enough, before the month's out."

"Shall I, Johnny? We want something. The ring men have had it all their own way lately."

"I know they have, your Grace. But if you *would* only back your hosses when I say 'Back 'em!' you'd be right enough. But you do pile it on so!"

"How do you mean?"

"Why, your Grace, I mean this. Betting on every race—backin' other people's hosses—goin' and takin' sixes to four and even money when it's ten to one agen you—pilin' the money on to get back your own, and then plugin' on what you fancy's a good thing—till there's no end to it!"

The Duke bit the amber tip of his cigarette holder rather fiercely, but made no reply.

John Butler continued.

"There's been on'y one race all the week as was worth bettin' on. That was the Cup."

"You told me to back Dinner-bell."

"I know I did, your Grace—I know I did," replied the trainer, in an injured tone. "I admit it. I thought as the colt'd win."

"He didn't. Confound the horses, I say!" said the Duke, now in perfect good temper again.

"Well, just so, your Grace; though it aint the hosses' fault, nor the trainer's fault. It's luck. But look what a run you've had, pullin' everything off as we entered a horse for!"

"We have done pretty well, Johnny," said his Grace, smiling and thinking of the balance to his credit in the mystical volumes at the Messrs. Weatherby's, and of the various solid pieces of plate on his sideboard at Malton—trophies of his victories.

"I don't complain of the number of races we've won. It's in the bets I have got wrong about lately."

"You only back a horse when I say back a horse, and you'll be right enough. You can—" and Butler, who really had his young master's interests at heart, hesitated about finishing his sentence. His look was pregnant with meaning.

Fairholme understood it.

"I know what you mean, Johnny," he said, laughing. "Yes, I can settle as usual, through Hardwick, next Monday. But we must not let them hit us so hard again in a hurry."

And saying this, he mounted his cob, and rode off.

This conversation between his Grace and his trainer took place in the stable yard of Butler's establishment on the Downs, after the last race on the last day of the Malton meeting—a meeting at which Fairholme had the first taste of ill-luck, and got the first inkling—though he hardly saw it then—that he was playing a game against odds—that his opponents held in their hands loaded dice: in fact, that his wits were not worth £20,000 a year to him in the ring.

Fairholme's friends, Lords Essendene and Epsom, Mr. Jack Childers, Captain Shairp, and many others, were made to pull very wry faces by the turn affairs took.

"Dash it!" remarked the Captain; "if you visit a man, and get the tip direct, you expect his horses to win, and you back them accordingly."

"So you do," accorded Jack. "I have been hit heavyish myself."

Mr. Childers had made himself a fixture in Fairholme's establishment. All the party whom the Duke had called together to partake of the princely hospitalities of his country seat at Malton had betaken themselves to town—to the seaside—to whatever place was next in order in their list of engagements—directly the meeting was over. And the noble owner of Malton Park felt himself dull with no other society than that of his friend, Jack Childers, and some one or two others of his intimates who chose to linger for a day or two after the rest of the company had departed.

When these, too, had gone their several ways, Fairholme accepted Sir Harold's invitation to spend a day or two at the Chase. The friends of the Baronet had left the hospitable mansion of their host at the end of the meeting on Malton Downs, with which the name of Sir Harold Mortimer had been so long and so honourably associated, and were now scattered and dispersed about the country. Only Robert Mortimer and his son Charles remained at the Chase. So that, when Fairholme cheerfully accepted the invitation of his former guardian, to spend a day or two at Madingley, they were quite a family party; and all expressed their pleasure at the change from the bustle and commotion of the past few days to the quiet and tranquil routine of their usual daily life.

"And when are Charlie and Mabel to be

married—eh, Robert?" said Miss Margaret, stepping out of the French window of the breakfast-room on to the terrace—where Sir Harold and Robert Mortimer, arm in arm, were walking up and down, enjoying the breeze, and the shade thrown over the broad gravel walk by the house.

"I suppose that, as far as we are concerned, we must leave that to you two ladies, Margaret," replied her brother.

"I do not know that there needs be any delay about it now," said Sir Harold, putting his arm affectionately through his sister's. "They have both of them had plenty of time for consideration, and are old enough to know their own minds about the matter."

"There is just the mischief of it," said Miss Margaret, wrinkling her smooth and usually placid brow into a pucker of furrows. "I believe they would have esteemed each other very much more if old Sir Everard Spencer had left the disposal of her hand more entirely at Mabel's own choice. I believe they would have loved each other very much more if no such arrangement had been made for them, and if everything had been left to them."

"Tut, tut!" said Sir Harold, smiling, and gently pressing his sister's arm. "What do you know about love-making, Margaret?"

"Oh, I have my own notions on the subject, brother, though I have never been called upon to apply them in practice."

"I don't know about that," replied her brother, rallying Miss Margaret upon a former flame. "You know we all thought once that you were going to have the General."

"But you were mistaken, Harold. I have never left you," said his sister, exchanging with him an affectionate glance, which showed plainly enough the warmth of their affection for each other.

"I think Mabel and Charlie love each other very much," said Robert Mortimer, with his sinister smile. "It is quite news to me if they don't. At least, I will answer for Charles; and you know, Margaret, you have always had Mabel under your own care, so she ought to be quite a paragon."

"So she is," said the gallant old Baronet, warmly. "She is the very best girl in England."

"You misunderstand me, Robert," said Miss Margaret, changing her position by Sir Harold's side for the arm of her brother Robert.

"Possibly I do," he replied, in a tone which implied that such a thing was quite out of the question. "But I cannot listen with patience and hear cold water thrown on Charles's love for Mabel—and by you, Margaret."

"There, then—there, Robert!" said the good spinster; "that is just like you. You will not let me explain what I meant."

"Hear what Margaret has to say," said Sir Harold. "We have often talked the matter over together before."

"Oh, certainly—of course," replied the member for Malton; "but I cannot allow Charles's love and devotion to Mabel to be doubted for a moment. And I know she loves him as well as he loves her, for I have it from her own lips."

"Just so, Robert," Miss Margaret continued. "I do not deny the truth of what you say for an instant. You know, Charlie—dear boy!—has always been my first favourite; and, if anybody is responsible for spoiling him and making a goose of him when he was a boy, I am."

"You were always the best of aunts—and of women," said Robert, gallantly bowing and raising his hat.

Hereat Miss Margaret laughed, and he laughed too; and so the peace was quite restored between them.

"All I meant to say, or wished to say, Robert, was this"—Miss Margaret began.

"Don't say another word about it, I beg, my dear Margaret."

"Oh, but I will, if you please, explain what I meant. We have often heard Mabel—who is the dearest of girls—say that she somehow disliked the fetter placed upon her choice by her father, and would have chosen dear Charlie with better grace without it, have we not, Harold? Now, that is all I have to say about it, Robert."

"And quite enough, Margaret, since I did not want any explanation at all. I know you love Charles and Mabel as dearly as if they were your own children."

"I do, Robert," responded his sister.

"But, as to the freedom from fetters, I don't agree with you. Mabel might never have thought of Charles had it not first been put into her pretty head by somebody else. Ha, ha, ha!" he added, laughing, "she might have fallen in love with your secretary, for instance, Mr. Reginald Erle—a gentleman, doubtless, but disapproved of by me from the first as too young. I could

have found you just the man you wanted if you had let me know," said Robert, "but it is too late now."

"Thank you," said Sir Harold, dryly; for he very much disliked interference in his private affairs. "I thought you knew all about the matter from the first. I know I told Charles to tell you. As it is, luckily, I have just the man I want. There is no one for whom I entertain a higher esteem than for Mr. Erle; and, *ceteris paribus*, no man could have made a better husband for Mabel, if she had not been already engaged."

"Of course, such a thing is absurdly out of the question," said Miss Margaret, the blood of the Mortimers rising to her cheek.

"Of course it is," said Sir Harold. "I am only paying a justly earned tribute to Mr. Erle's many good qualities."

"Say no more," said Robert, smiling, and pointing in the direction of a summer-house immediately in front of them, sheltered by the trees at the end of the terrace. "See, there is a picture of love!"

Charles sat by Mabel's side. They were reading Tennyson together.

CHAPTER IX.

MALTON PROPOSES A SECOND TIME.

"I SHALL see Mr. Johnson this evening," said Erle, as they sat at luncheon that day, "and I will instruct him then about the lease of Smith's, Sir Harold."

"Very well, that will be soon enough," replied the Baronet.

"Help me to some of the mayonnaise, Mr. Erle," said Mabel Despencer. "Thank you," she said, when the servant placed her plate before her. "But where are you going to see Mr. Johnson this evening? Is he coming to the Chase about something?"

"I am invited to supper with his family, Miss Despencer, and shall ask Miss Margaret's permission to absent myself from the dinner-table to-day."

"But you will want dinner as well as supper, Mr. Erle," said Fairholme, who sat by the side of Mabel.

Charlie sat on her left hand.

"Your Grace, Sir Harold's steward sups almost as soon as you will dine."

"Then we sha'n't finish our games at piquet to-night, Mr. Erle?" said Miss Margaret, from the bottom of the table.

"I will play with you instead of Mr. Erle," said Fairholme.

"Then I hope you will keep sober," muttered Robert Mortimer to himself.

"I am sure we all hope you will enjoy yourself very much, and not fall in love either with Miss Ivica Johnson or Miss Majorca Pring, who are very fascinating, though slightly eccentric, personages," said Miss Margaret, archly.

"I have promised for a long time to go, and now I am fairly obliged."

"You recollect," said Sir Harold, "they drove Campbell and Mr. Erle to the gates of the park on the first race-day. Mr. Erle told us then he was caught by Miss Majorca. Well, well, they are honest people—honest people—and have been good servants to us, and to those who were here before us. I like the Johnsons, and I confess I hope the last will not be deposed. Do you hear that, brother and nephew?"

Father and son both protested that the thing most repugnant of all things to their notions was the discharging of an old adherent.

"Oh, you idiot and fool!" said Robert Mortimer to his son, as he took his arm affectionately after luncheon, and led him out on to the terrace.

"What now?" said Charles. "I have been spooning Mabel all the morning. Wouldn't even smoke a cigar, and refused to play at pyramids with Fairholme, though I can give him three balls and beat him easily."

"I call you a fool for ever bringing that fellow of a secretary here—you see how they all treat him."

"You have said enough about that before, sir," replied Charles, looking sullenly at his father. "What's done can't be undone. I knew the man at Cambridge, and he has conducted himself very well, I believe."

"Too well," hissed the father. "You little thought the mischief you were doing in introducing the fellow into such a family. I know his history. It isn't very creditable."

"What is it? What is all this absurd fuss and mystery about the man? What do you know about him?"

Robert Mortimer made no reply for a minute or more. It was his way now of showing Charles how a parent could support his parent-like dignity—against odds, for the son was more than a match for the father. He said, with some warmth—

"It was only this morning your uncle made me quite angry by saying that Mabel could not have a better husband than this secretary."

"Eh!" said Charles, starting. "What! He did not say that, surely?"

"He did."

"If I were not in the way, of course."

"I do not know. I never do know all your uncle means."

This was a very unfair and underhand blow in the dark at the frank, honest old soldier, who had at all times been ready to open his purse to his poorer brother. Truly, gratitude consists in a lively expectation and hope of favours to come.

"Cannot Erle be got rid of?"

"It is not impossible, I dare say," replied the politician, who had previously turned the thing over in his mind.

"Something official—under Government, I mean? You could get it."

"We must tempt him away, not try to induce your uncle to part with him. You see how they all treat him."

"But why want to get him out of the house at all?" asked Charles.

"Take a seat, sir," said Old Nat, nodding and shaking his head when Erle arrived at the residence of the Johnsons, in the little town of Malton. "Take a seat, sir," said the old gentleman, nodding and quivering out his welcome. "Fine weather for hay, sir."

"Ah! here is Mr. Erle at last," said Miss Majorca Pring, with great quickness and volubility. "I knew he was to be depended upon for punctuality."

"Punctual at meal-times is everything," nodded Old Nat from his easy chair, as he just caught the word uttered by the familiar voice of Miss Majorca.

Miss Ivica and Mr. Nathaniel Johnson the younger, together with Mr. Grobey, gave our hero a cordial welcome.

There were two arm-chairs in Old Nat's corner on this festive occasion—one being occupied by Old Nat, and the other by old Mr. Gildersley.

"My son Nat's got company, Mr. Erle," said old Mr. Johnson, "and I've got company."

"Yes; I'm your company, I am," said his friend, Mr. Gildersley, who enjoyed the fame of being the oldest "respectable" inhabitant of Malton. "We've been com-



Once a Week.]

“WHAT IS ALL THIS?” EXCLAIMED MISS MARGARET. (Puz.)—Page 544.

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pany a good many times before, haven't we?"

"Fine weather for hay," observed Old Nat.

"Ah! he don't hear me, sir," said old Mr. Gildersley, addressing Erle. "He's lost his hearing; but, thank God, I've got all my faculties pretty comfortable yet."

"Don't let those old fogies bore you, Mr. Erle, pray!" said Miss Ivica Johnson. "Shall we go into supper now, aunt?"

So all Miss Majorca's friends and guests went into the supper-room, Erle giving his strong arm to that lady herself. The two old gentlemen were left alone in the sitting-room together.

"We don't eat supper—neither of us," said old Mr. Gildersley.

"Gildersley!" said Old Nat, "I'll pull the bell. We'll have a pipe and some brandy and water."

Accordingly he pulled the bell, which was close at hand, and in a few seconds the two old gentlemen were puffing a very fine cloud of smoke together.

"Mr. Erle is a fine young man!" roared Mr. Gildersley at the top of his voice, in the hope of making his old friend hear.

"It is very fine weather," was Old Nat's imperturbable reply. "Rayther too hot, if anything."

"He's the very image of the Mortimer family, as I recollect years and years ago. Don't you think he is? But, ah! I forgot you can't hear. It's no use talking to you."

This Mr. Gildersley said in a tone of very vast superiority.

After about three-quarters of an hour had elapsed, the company came in again from supper, and cards and conversation followed in the ordinary course of affairs.

During supper Erle had hardly heard the soft accents of Miss Ivica, or of her aunt, Miss Pring. He had been thinking all the time of a lovely girl he had spoken to over the sweetbriar hedge of the parsonage—of Beatrice Mildmay, after whose health he stopped to inquire on his way from the Chase to Mr. Johnson's house.

Beatrice had looked pale at times for a long while past, and her father had become very anxious about her health.

She looked charming, though, on that July evening, as Erle saw her, and conversed with her over the sweetbriar hedge.

The Reverend Hugh was smoking his pipe thoughtfully among the roses.

"Come, now, you are just the man I wanted to see," said he, cheerily.

"You will spend the evening with us, Mr. Erle. Papa is sadly in want of some one to talk to. He has been quite glum and unnaturally quiet all day," said the fair maiden, blushing slightly as she spoke to the man she loved.

She scarcely knew that it was on her own account that her father looked so sad. The seeds of consumption were growing apace in that fair garden.

And, after the substantial supper at Mr. Johnson's hospitable though lonely board, Erle hardly felt disposed to be amused by the lively sallies of the aunt, or the grandiloquent speeches of the niece, intended to display her varied accomplishments before the young secretary's astonished gaze.

He seated himself by the two old gentlemen, while the others of the party played at cards; and was mightily amused by old Mr. Gildersley's quaint sayings. He sat and drank brandy and water, and smoked his pipe with them.

Mr. Johnson the younger joined the little group.

"Father's very lively to-night; he likes company. It livens him up. You like company, father?" he roared, putting his hands to his mouth, and that organ close to his parent's ear.

"Yes—very fine," said Old Nat; his thoughts dwelling, as usual, on his favourite subject.

"The old gentleman gets deafer, I think," said the son. "Majorca is the only one who can make him hear a word."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Uncle Nathaniel!" glibly observed the all-accomplished Miss Ivica. "I can make him hear on favourable days."

"Then we may conclude that this is not a favourable day, Miss Johnson?" said Erle.

"I think the fact is tolerably obvious," said Miss Ivica, smiling blandly upon our friend Reginald.

"I've been saying to Mr. Erle that I think he is very like the Mortimer family," remarked Mr. Gildersley, addressing Mr. Johnson the younger. "Do you not think he is?"

Mr. Johnson, after a moment's pause, said he thought there might be some likeness.

"I recollect them before you do, you

know. Your father and I recollect Sir Harold—may he live to be as old as I am, and as well with it—and Mr. Reginald, and Mr. Robert, his half-brothers, by old Sir Harold's second wife, when they were all boys. Harum-scarum young rascals they were, all three of them. Ha, ha, ha! That they were."

"Your name is Reginald, Mr. Erle," observed Mr. Johnson the younger, respectfully. "Sir Harold had a brother of that name."

Dinner at the Chase that evening went off very agreeably. Fairholme was full of fun and high spirits, and had apparently quite got over his losses during the week. Sir Harold and he, and Robert and his son, sat over the Baronet's claret longer than usual. It was with a smile of the sincerest pleasure that the member for Malton saw Fairholme's head becoming unsteady, and his eyes betraying the usual symptoms of ebriety.

"Here, Sharlie, I'm not going yet," he said, when Sir Harold and the Pink Tape official left the room; "I'm going to have some S. and B."

"Ma-bel—that is, Miss Despencer, I mean, of coursh; I beg a thousandsh pardons."

"Your Grace has my pardon. But let me pass you, please," said Mabel, haughtily, but with some difficulty repressing a smile, as she gazed upon Fairholme's comical appearance.

"Letsh you pass; I can't, Miss Deshpencer—Mabel, I must call you," exclaimed the poor boy, dropping on his knees. "You would not say yesh—be a marchioness once—you reclect. Will you be a duchess now?"

"Let me pass you, Fairholme," said Mabel.

"Never—till you say yesh."

"Sir—your Grace!" exclaimed Mabel, drawing her fine figure up to its full height, and looking down scornfully on the tipsy youth who presumed to stay her progress.

"I knew where I sh' find you," he said, rising from his knees.

Then, bursting into a loud laugh, he set his back against the door.

"Now, then, Miss Mabel," he said.

"Open the door for me, sir! and be ashamed of your conduct," said Mabel, reproachfully.

"What is all this?" exclaimed Miss Margaret Mortimer, in deep surprise, as she entered from a door at the opposite side of the room.

"What is this you are doing, Fairholme?" said Charles Mortimer, approaching and taking firm hold of his Grace's arm.

He had just removed him from the door when Erle entered.

"Sir Harold has requested me to take care of his Grace," he said.

"I think I am the proper person to do so," said Charles, angrily.

"If you will allow me, I will carry out Sir Harold's instructions," said Erle. "I can easily manage the Duke of Fairholme."

He could have carried them both.

"A very managing young man," said Robert Mortimer, when Erle and the Duke had vanished. "Margaret, I am surprised you permit this. My son slighted in this way! We shall not forget it."

"You see, Robert, Mr. Erle has such tact and good temper, that I dare say Harold thought he could best manage Fairholme now. I never saw him tipsy before. It is disgraceful of him. We have all such confidence in Mr. Erle."

"Too much, I think; and quite without reason," Robert growled.

ON SLEEP AND DREAMS.—PART II.

BY AN OLD PHYSICIAN.

BEFORE proceeding to discuss the very difficult subject of "the state of the mind during sleep," we may advantageously introduce a few observations on some of the most remarkable physical phenomena that accompany the sleeping condition. The immediate antecedents of sleep—as languor, a sensation of weight in the upper eyelids, partial temporary relaxation of certain muscles, as shown by the nodding and dropping of the head upon the breast, comparative obtuseness to external impressions, yawning, &c.—call for no very special remark. The order in which the muscles lose their power is, however, deserving of a passing notice. The muscles which move the arms and legs usually become relaxed before those which support the head; and the latter before those which maintain the body in an erect position. There are, however, many exceptions to this rule, as may be seen in church on a hot Sunday, when some of the congregation are almost certain

to be seen with their chins quietly resting on their chests, but yet tightly grasping their prayer books. Moreover, in relation to the special senses, that of sight is first lost, the closing of the eyelids setting up a barrier between the retina and the external world; but, independently of the eyelids—if they have been removed by the surgeon, or cannot be closed through disease—the sight is still the first sense whose function is abolished. Some animals, as the hare, do not shut their eyes when asleep; and in cases of somnambulism the eyes remain open, although the sense of sight is temporarily lost.* The other senses, as Dr. Hammond tells us, are not altogether abolished; but their acuteness is much lessened. Taste is the first to disappear, and then smell; hearing follows; and touch is the most persistent of the senses. So, conversely, a person is most easily awakened by tactual expressions, next in order by sounds, and then by smell.

Although the operations of the senses are suspended during sleep, the animal functions—as respiration, circulation, digestion, secretion, &c.—continue their regular action. With the brain and spinal cord, however, the case is different from that of the lungs, heart, &c.; for, while some parts of the central nervous system retain the property of receiving impressions or developing ideas, others have their actions arrested, diminished, increased, or perverted. To use the almost epigrammatic words of Marshall Hall, “the spinal cord never sleeps.” In connection with the question as to how the different faculties of the nerves are affected by sleep, Dr. Hammond observes that “it has been thought by some authors that several of them are really exalted above the standard attained during wakefulness, but this is probably a wrong view.

“The predominance which one or two mental qualities apparently assume is not due to any absolute exaggeration of power, but to the suspension of the action of other faculties which, when we are not asleep, exercise a governing or modifying influence. Thus, for instance, as regards the imagination—the faculty of all others which appears to be most increased—we find, when we

carefully study its manifestations in our own persons, that although there is often great brilliancy in its vagaries, when uncontrolled as it is by the judgment, the pictures which it paints upon our minds are usually incongruous and silly in the extreme. Even though the train of ideas excited by this faculty when we are asleep be rational and coherent, we are fully conscious on awaking that we are capable of doing much better, by intentionally setting the brain in action, and governing it by our will and judgment.

“Owing to the fact that these two faculties of the mind are incapable of acting normally during sleep, the imagination is left absolutely without controlling influence; indeed, we are often cognizant, in those dreams which take place when we are half-awake, of an inability to direct it. The impressions which it makes upon the mind are, therefore, intense, but of very little durability. Many stories are told of its power—how problems have been worked out, poetry and music composed, and great undertakings planned; but, if we could get at the truth, we should probably find that the imagination of sleep had very little to do with the operations mentioned. Indeed, it is doubtful if the mind of a sleeping person can originate ideas” (see p. 64, *op. cit.*).

The cases we shall shortly quote, when carefully analyzed, tend to show the correctness of the view propounded by Locke, in his celebrated “Essay concerning Human Understanding,” that the ideas in the mind during sleep are frequently ideas that have previously occurred in the waking state, often strangely and incongruously put together.

That the mind is often highly active during sleep is a fact which cannot be called in question. Most of our readers are, doubtless, acquainted with the well-known stories of Tartini and the “Devil’s Sonata;” of Coleridge’s account of the composition of the fragment, “Kubla Khan;” and of the dreams recorded by De Quincey, in “The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater.” In Seafield’s “Literature and Curiosities of Dreams,” quoted by Dr. Hammond, there are some lines of poetry (of not more than average value) composed by a Dr. Cromwell during a sleep that followed his taking an anodyne draught, and which were written down within half an hour after awaking. In the last two of these cases, there can be no doubt that the special cerebral excitement was due to the action of opium. The mar-

* This singular fact was known to our great dramatist:—

Doctor. You see, her eyes are open.

Gentlewoman. Aye, but their sense is shut.

“Macbeth,” act v., sc. 1.

vellous power of this drug, even when taken in small doses, in arousing the imagination, is so remarkably illustrated by the following case, which fell under the observation of Dr. Forbes Winslow, that we venture to record it without material abbreviation:—A feeble, sensitive lady, suffering from a painful disease, for which she was recommended to take an anodyne, writes as follows to this eminent psychologist regarding the effect of three or four doses of very minute quantities (one-sixteenth of a grain) of hydrochlorate of morphia upon her imaginative faculties. (It is almost needless to observe that morphia is one of the alkaloids occurring in crude or natural opium.)

"After taking a few doses of morphia, I felt a sensation of extreme quiet and wish for repose; and, on closing my eyes, visions, if I may so call them, were constantly before me, and as constantly changing their aspect: scenes from foreign lands, lovely landscapes, with tall, magnificent trees; covered with drooping foliage, which was blown gently against me as I walked along: then, in an instant, I was in a besieged city, filled with armed men: I was carrying an infant, which was snatched from me by a soldier, and killed on the spot: a Turk was standing by, with a scimitar in his hand, which I seized, and attacking the man who had killed the child, I fought most furiously with him, and killed him: then I was surrounded, made prisoner, carried before a judge, and accused of the deed; but I pleaded my own cause with such a burst of eloquence (which, by the bye, I am quite incapable of in my right mind) that judge, jury, and hearers acquitted me at once. Again, I was in an Eastern city, visiting an Oriental lady, who entertained me most charmingly: we sat together on rich ottomans, and were regaled with supper and confectionery: then came soft sounds of music at a distance, while fountains were playing, and birds singing, and girls danced before us, every movement being accompanied with the tinkling of silver bells attached to their feet. But all this suddenly changed, and I was entertaining the Oriental lady in my own house; and, in order to please her delicate taste, I had everything prepared, as nearly as possible, after the fashion with which she had so enchanted me. She, however, to my no small surprise, asked for wine, and took, not one, two, or three glasses, but drank freely, until at last I

became terrified that she would have to be carried away intoxicated. While considering what course I had better adopt, several English officers came in, and she at once asked them to drink with her, which so shocked my sense of propriety that the scene changed, and I was in darkness. Then I felt that I was formed of granite, and immovable: suddenly a change came again over me, and I found that I consisted of delicate and fragile basket-work. Then I became a *danseuse*, delighting an audience and myself by movements which seemed barely to touch the earth. Presently, beautiful sights came before me: treasures from the depths of the sea, gems of the brightest hues, gorgeous shells, coral of the richest colours, sparkling with drops of water, and hung with lovely seaweed. My eager glances could not take in half the beautiful objects that passed before me during the incessant changes the visions underwent. Now I was gazing upon antique brooches and rings from buried cities; now upon a series of Egyptian vases; now upon sculptured wood-work, blackened by time; and, lastly, I was buried beneath forests of tall trees, such as I had read of but never seen. The sights that pleased me most I had power, to a certain extent, to prolong, and those that displeased me I could occasionally set aside; and I awoke myself to full consciousness once or twice, while under the influence of the morphia, by an angry exclamation that I would not have it. I did not once lose my personal identity."

Dr. Forbes Winslow observes that this lady almost invariably suffers more or less from hallucinations of the foregoing character if it becomes necessary to administer an opiate; and, on analyzing her visions, she can generally refer the principal portions of them, notwithstanding their confusion and distortion, to works that she has recently read.

From these and other cases, Dr. Hammond comes to the conclusion that, although the imagination may undoubtedly be active during sleep, "we have no authentic instance on record that it has, unaided by causes which exercise a powerful influence over the intercranial circulation, led to the production of any ideas which could not be excelled by the individual when awake."

The memory is exercised to a great extent during sleep, and knowledge acquired long ago, and totally irrevocable in the

waking state, sometimes crops up most marvellously in dreams. Numerous cases are on record of persons, when dreaming, speaking words or sentences of a language that they had learnt, or perhaps only heard, in childhood, and had in their waking state utterly forgotten.

The following remarks upon the judgment during sleep are well worthy of attention. Dr. Hammond, who seems unaware that in many points he has been anticipated by Cicero, observes, in reference to this subject, that "the judgment is frequently exercised when we are asleep, but almost invariably in a perverted manner; in fact, we scarcely ever estimate the events or circumstances which appear to transpire in our dreams at their real value, and very rarely form correct conceptions of right and wrong. High-minded and honourable men do not scruple during sleep to sanction the most atrocious acts, or regard with complacency ideas which, in their waking moments, fill them with horror. Delicate and refined women will coolly enter upon a career of crime; and the minds of hardened villains are filled with the most elevated and noble sentiments. The deeds which we imagine we perform in our sleep are generally inadequate to, or in excess of, what the apparent occasion requires; and we lose so entirely the ideas of probability and possibility, that no preposterous vision appears otherwise than as perfectly natural and correct. Thus, a physician dreamed that he had been transformed into a monolith, which stood grandly and alone in the vast desert of the Sahara, and had stood so for ages, while generation after generation wasted and melted away around him; although unconscious of having organs of sense, this column of granite saw the mountains growing bald with age, the forests drooping with decay, and the moss and ivy creeping around its crumbling base" (p. 79).

Dr. Hammond is of opinion that during sleep the power of bringing the judgment into action is suspended. "We do not actually lose the power of arriving at a decision; but we cannot exert the faculty of judgment in accordance with the principles of truth and of correct reasoning. An opinion may, therefore, be formed during sleep, but it is more likely to be wrong than right; and no effort that we can make will enable us to distinguish the false from the true, or to discriminate between the possible

and the impossible. That faculty of the mind—the judgment—which, when we are awake, is pre-eminently our guide, can no longer direct us aright. The stores of experience go for naught, and the mind accepts as truth whatever preposterous thought the imagination presents to it. We are not entirely rendered incapable of judging, as some authors assert; but the power to perceive the logical force of circumstances, to take them at their true value, and to eliminate error from our mental processes, is altogether arrested, and we arrive at absurd conclusions from impossible premises." But there is no doubt that at times the faculty of judgment is suspended, as regards some parts of our mental operations, during sleep; and this to such an extent, that we are like Gassendi, who, as he slept, saw and conversed with a friend, who, as he knew, had died of the plague. Then he reflected in his dream as follows:—"One cannot return from the other world: I am, doubtless, dreaming; but, if I dream, where am I?—not in Paris, for I came last night to Digne!" And while arguing with himself as to where he was, and while looking for himself in the bed, he awoke.

A case in which the judgment was even more at fault than in the above instance recently came under Dr. Hammond's personal knowledge:—Mrs. C. dreamed that she was Savonarola, and that she was preaching to a vast assembly in Florence. Among the audience was a lady whom she at once recognized to be her own self. As Savonarola, she was delighted at this discovery; for she reflected that she was well acquainted with all Mrs. C.'s peculiarities and faults of character, and would, therefore, be enabled to give special emphasis to them in the sermon. She did this so very effectively that Mrs. C. burst into a torrent of tears, and with the emotion thus excited the lady awoke. It was some time before she was able to disentangle her mixed-up individualities. When she became fully awake, she perceived that the arguments she had employed to bring about the conversion of herself were puerile in the extreme, and were directed against characteristics which formed no part of her mental organization, and against offences which she had not committed.

Macario, whose work on "Sleep and Dreams" is well worthy of perusal, explains the preposterous nature of such dreams as

these in the following way:—"It is astonishing," he observes, "that all these fantastical and impossible visions seem to us quite natural, and excite no astonishment. This is because the judgment and reflection, having temporarily abdicated, no longer control the imagination nor co-ordinate the thoughts, which rush tumultuously through the head of the sleeper, controlled only by the power of association.*

Why the judgment is not properly exercised during sleep we do not know, and, in all probability, we shall never know with certainty. Dr. Wilson Philip and other physiologists have suggested explanations, all of which are unsatisfactory. Dr. Hammond suggests that the cause probably lies in some alteration in the circulation of the blood in that part of the brain which presides over the judgment. But where is this part localised?

Dr. Hammond sums up his very interesting observations on "Sleep and its Derangements" in the following paragraphs:—

"During sleep the three great divisions of the mind are differently affected.

"1. Feeling, embracing sensation and emotion, is suspended, so far as the first is concerned, but is in full action as regards the second. We do not see, hear, smell, taste, or enjoy the sense of touch in sleep, although the brain may be aroused into activity, and we may awake through the excitations conveyed to it by the special senses. The emotions have full play, unrestrained by the will, and governed only by the imagination.

"2. The Will, or Volition, is entirely suspended.

"3. The Thought, or Intellect, is variously affected in its different powers. The imagination is active, and the memory may be exercised to a great extent; but the judgment, perception, conception, abstraction, and reason are weakened, and sometimes altogether lost."

TABLE TALK.

THERE has been some discussion lately as to the practical advantages of encouraging the use of the Welsh language. The probability is that it is now, socially, a bar to the material interests and national progress

of the Welsh themselves; but, in a religious point of view, the following anecdote may indicate that it is the means of conveying to them advantages which English clergymen have seldom the inclination or courage to impart to their congregation. An English resident in Wales recently, walking from church with his rector, complimented him upon the excellence and importance of the sermon he had preached; and added that it reminded him of Bishop Horsley's remarkable sermon on "Our Lord's Descent into Hell." "Did you recognize any similarity of language?" he inquired. "No," was the reply; "but a close resemblance in the treatment of the subject." "Well, now," said the rector, "I'll tell you a secret. The original sermon *is* by Bishop Horsley. My general practice is this. There are not half a dozen in my congregation, either Welsh or English, who have the remotest chance of ever knowing anything of the teaching of our best divines, unless I impart it to them. So I translate the sermons (with curtailment) of our standard authors for my Welsh congregation, and re-translate them for my English congregation; by which process—unless, like yourself, an individual happens to be well acquainted with the original—there is not the slightest chance of my useful piracy being suspected."

THE SOMEWHAT SUDDEN and lamentable death of Lord Justice Giffard may lead to a reconstruction of the Appellate Court in Chancery. After the death of the late Lord Justice Selwyn—brother of the Bishop of Lichfield and Canon Selwyn, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge—Lord Justice Giffard sat alone a great deal; and, of course, through the neglect of the Government to fill up the vacancy caused by the death of his coadjutor, Sir Jasper Selwyn, Lord Justice Giffard had much more than his fair share of work to perform. The Lord Chancellor, who is one of the judges of the Court of Appeal, was often absent; and the arrears of business, and consequent injury to suitors, were very considerable. Only a few days ago, Mr. Gladstone made the chief judge in bankruptcy a lord justice in this Appellate Court, calling upon him also to discharge his duties as a judge in bankruptcy. The Lord Chancellor has too much to do by at least one-third part—all the judges are overworked; then, in the face of this, why does the Government try to

* Macario, "Du Sommeil, des Rêves, et du Somnambulisme," p. 286.

save a few thousands a-year by refusing to increase the number of the judges? Cheap law is another name for injustice, and hurry, and neglect. Suitors know to their cost what it is to have a case tried by a judge who is wanted in three different places at once. We must have more judges, and without delay. Sir Roundell Palmer is the best man for the vacant lord justiceship; but, as his income from his profession last year was upwards of £20,000, how is it to be expected that he will accept £6,000 a-year and a judgeship? Besides, he is very likely to be waiting for the Chancellorship in a Ministry that does not require the abolition of churches! Compared with the incomes of barristers, the judges are underpaid, and we must also add—with sincere regret for them and for ourselves—they are very much overworked men, too.

WE ARE INDEBTED to Mr. J. R. Robinson, a Yorkshire poet and man of letters, for this interesting account of a very curious institution subsisting in a Yorkshire town at as late a period as the year 1650, the Halifax Gibbet Law:—"The inhabitants of the forest of Hardwick—which was co-extensive with the parish of Halifax—had the custom that, if a felon was taken within their liberty, with goods stolen out or within the liberty of the said forest, either *handhabend*, *backberand*, or *confessand*, of the value of thirtepenne-halfpenny, he should, after three markets or meeting-days within the town of Halifax next after such apprehension, be tried, and, being condemned, be taken to the gibbet, and have his head cut off from his body." He was, however, to be publicly and deliberately tried by a jury composed of frith-burghers of the said liberty. The process was this:—On arrest he was brought before the Lord Bailiff, who lived at Halifax, kept the gaol, had the custody of the axe, and was the legal executioner. He issued his summons to the constables of the four townships of the said liberty, requiring four frith-burghers from each to appear before him on a certain day to inquire into the truth of the charge. At the trial the accuser and accused were confronted before the jury, and the stolen goods produced. If the accused was acquitted, he was immediately liberated; if condemned, he was at once executed if that was the principal market day, if not, he was placed in the stocks, with the stolen goods on his back, except

they were too heavy, when they were laid in front of the stocks, that all might see. The execution always took place on the great market-day, in order to strike the more terror throughout the district; and was performed by means of an instrument called a gibbet, which was raised upon a platform, four feet high and thirteen feet square, faced on every side with stone, and ascended by a flight of steps. In the middle of this platform was placed two upright pieces of timber, fifteen feet high, joined at the top by a transverse beam. Within these was a square block of wood, four feet and a half long, which moved up and down by means of grooves made for that purpose, to the lower part of which was fastened an iron axe, which weighed seven pounds twelve ounces. This axe, thus fixed, was drawn up by means of a cord and pulley. At the end of the cord was a pin, fixed to the block, which kept it suspended until the moment of execution; when, the culprit's head being placed on the block, the pin was withdrawn, and his head instantly severed from his body. The Earl of Morton, passing through Halifax about the middle of the sixteenth century, witnessed one of these executions, ordered a model to be made of the gibbet; and on his return to Scotland—of which he was Regent—had a somewhat similar one constructed, which, remaining long unused, was called "The Maiden." But on the 3rd of June, 1581, he was himself executed by it. The number executed by the Halifax gibbet from 1541 to 1650 was 49. This, combined with the strict discipline of the Hull constables, doubtless gave rise to the thieves' and vagabonds' prayer—

"From Hull and Halifax, good Lord deliver us."

"SLAVERY IN TURKEY," a paper read before the Anthropological Society of London, by Major Millingen, has been published. The gallant Major throws cold water on the prospects of success enjoyed by Sir Samuel Baker's mission for the suppression of the slave trade carried on between Turkey and Africa. He thinks that slavery, as a system, is too deeply rooted in the social habits of the modern Turks to be willingly given up by them. The pamphlet is very amusing, and contains many things new to European readers. Among other things mentioned by Major Millingen, we may notice that he contradicts—

"The general impression that the reigning Sultan,

Abdul Aziz, is the husband of only one wife. The fact is, he has three—the first, Eda-dil, was his wife before he ascended the throne; the second, Havranidil, he married to commemorate that event; and the third, Durney, was forced upon him by a sister, with whom he had quarrelled and become reconciled, either as a peace-offering or an instrument of revenge."

A CORRESPONDENT: In continuation of my note on "Plagiarisms," p. 506, I may observe that Milton, in his "Paradise Lost," applies the term "clarion" to the crowing of the cock:—

"The crested cock whose clarion sounds
The silent hours."

Gray, in his "Elegy," catches up the idea, as "the cock's shrill clarion;" which is also repeated by Young, in the "Complaint," ii.—

"This midnight sentinel with clarion shrill;"

while Beattie, in his "Minstrel" (i., 36), has the same phrase;—

"Who scared'st the vision with thy clarion shrill,
Fell Chanticleer."

"Chanticleer," by the way, is a Shakspearean word ("As You Like It," ii., 7). Poor Chatterton, in his "Bristow Tragedy," wrote—

"The feather'd songster, Chanticleer,
Had wound his bugle-horn."

Perhaps he thought of an expressive line in Milton's "Lycidas"—

"Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
We drove afield, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn."

This Miltonic phrase is, however, more closely imitated by Collins, in his "Ode to Evening:"—

"Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn."

An idea repeated by poor John Clare—a poet not sufficiently read—in his poem on "Summer Morning:"—

"And hear the beetle sound his horn."

The Rev. F. W. Faber, in "The Contrast," has spoken of "the tiny trumpet of the bees;" and these comparisons of the sounds and songs of insect and bird life are common.

"Deep-toned doves
Coo to the fife-like carol of the lark,"

says Campbell, in his poem on "The Dead Eagle." Scott has the phrase, "the lark's shrill fife," in the "Lady of the Lake"

(i., 31). In the "Morte d'Arthur," Tennyson has this simile:—

"Like some full-breasted swan,
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death—"

And, in the "Gardener's Daughter," he says:—

"The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm."

In "Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere," he says:—

"Sometimes the linnet piped his song."

Blair, in "The Grave," has the lines:—

"Methought the shrill-tongued thrush
Mended his song of love; the sooty blackbird
Mellowed his pipe, and softened every note."

Thomson, in his "Spring," said, "The mellow bullfinch answers from the grove." Scott, in "The Lady of the Lake" (i., 31), says:—

"And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow."

The "bellowing boom" of the bittern is also mentioned by Crabbe, and by Ebenezer Elliott; while Howitt assigns the phrase to "the soaring cockchafer."

BED.

A LULLABY.

Good night—good night! For now it is high time
That I should go and rest my drowsy head.
Good night—good night! For the church clock
doth chime

The hour of ten—so let's be off to bed.

Good night—good night!

Let others, then, troll of the flowing bowl,
And say in its depths they can drown dull care;
That a man forgets his loves and his debts,
While quaffing its liquor, so rich and rare.

Good night—good night!

But as I well do know, an aching head
Is closely allied to the foaming cup;
While no pain awaits me on going to bed,
Save that, in ten hours hence, I must get up!
Good night—good night!

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ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

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THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES ;

OR,
MEMOIRS OF A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY.
BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

CHAPTER XXXIX.



THIS state of mind, Mr. Benbow underwent slow torture. It was no wonder that his hair appeared to be growing whiter, and that a worn and haggard ex-

pression seemed to be permanently settled on his face. It was a sort of look, half piteous, half of pain, that glanced about eagerly and quickly, from one to another face, with an eager inquiry. And thus the day bore him on, nearer and yet nearer, which was to bring the first appearance of his enemy on the scene.

What schemes came into his head as he paced about all that day, thinking it would never pass by! Was she not his enemy—his cruel, deadly enemy—to be treated as one would treat a dog or wild beast, who should be shot down or killed in some fashion? With these ideas, for the moment it occurred to him that this first appearance was to him all-important; that if it was successful it would be sheer ruin; for his son and his wife were young people, and

would presently hear the details of any remarkable and brilliant “hit.”

Some demon—so he called it a few minutes later—whispered to him that it was mere self-preservation to try and hinder this issue; and that if he could procure a band of men to go up and crowd the theatre, and make sure that she did not succeed—but no! We are not accountable for the thoughts which merely suggest themselves, provided they are not entertained as guests. And Mr. Benbow, with all his difficulties and miserable, harassing position, remained a gentleman to the end. And from this notion he turned away.

That night his son and daughter were giving a dinner party. But Mr. Benbow said he could not be present. He had another engagement. This seemed a little strange; but they made no remark. As the guests arrived, he took his way towards the theatre—a large building—one of those profitless, speculative new houses, built—as a man with money might open a shop—for the sake of diverting profit from its neighbours, but without any thought of its being called for by the demand. It was a large temple of the drama; and the manager, Mr. Hurdle, had engaged this provincial actress very much as he would take up a dice-box and throw.

Mr. Benbow entered the large house, and, after a little hesitation, chose the darkness of the second tier, in which he shrank away concealed; then stole a look round the house. Strange to say, it seemed full, very full. That hasty glance made him tremble. Full! how was this? They had told him that the theatre was a languishing one; that it was likely to be closed very soon—in a few days. But he did not count on the magic of two spells, invaluable to any dramatic necromancer who would conjure with them—a beautiful woman and a romantic play. He hadn't seen in the shop windows the artful bait of a glowing portrait—a be-

seeching face, fine hair all let down—beautifully coloured, before which many eager faces had clustered. Neither had he read, in some of the cheaper papers, various puffs preliminary, which had pointed to this shape of attraction. And there, too, was the admirable, ever-drawing piece of the “immortal Bulwer Lytton,” as the country manager called him, still to exert its attraction, and gather the honest, simple, eager natures in from the highways and byeways.

With what strange feelings did he again prepare to follow the history of that piece, now growing quite familiar to him! Somehow he seemed to think that it was to be associated ever with his destiny. He seemed to himself to be in a dream, and yet to be following its incidents with amazing interest. Yes; there was Pauline, splendid, more dazzling than ever; and her very presence bringing down a tumultuous roar of applause and greeting! It seemed to him the wild jangle of a number of funeral bells, gone mad and *pulled by demons*, at his very ear. Such was the strange image his disordered fancy supplied for the sound of a crowd clapping and shouting.

She looked superb indeed! Her voice was like a silver bell; there was poetry in every movement and attitude. To him, far off as he was, the genius that was in her made her look like some picture.

So the play began and went on; the gardener's son, played now by a different sort of person—the whole was romantic and absorbing. At the end of the first act there was enthusiasm; and, according to the usual formula of approbation, she was called before the curtain. Then came the next acts. Never was there such grace and tenderness, such love! Mr. Benbow felt his lips curl, his teeth grinding, as he said—

“Consummate hypocrite! How she shams these emotions!”

Yet he could not resist the spell. And once, when she was led out, found himself joining in the applause. At last it came to an end. The applause and enjoyment were so unmistakable and genuine, that he read in the dim, dusky crowd below, as though it were a Babylonian wall, the mystic letters, “MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN,” which he translated “Success and *furor*!” Yes; this was just what would take—the beautiful face and lovable acting—the vulgar would rush to see.

Alas! here was the end coming once

more. He went home he knew not how, and went upstairs. The party had not broken up; and, half mechanically, he turned into his son's drawing-room. Some of the guests started when they saw this wild-eyed man, who then looked round on them fiercely, recovered himself, and, turning abruptly, quitted the room.

CHAPTER XL.

WITH the morning, he came down betimes, and seized on the newspapers, which had just come in. Almost at once his eye lighted on large letters—a long critique—and the words, “Miss Elphinstone,” “Miss Elphinstone,” often repeated, seemed to dance up and down before his eyes, bewildering him, as though some one were waving a dark lantern. Yes; there was the leading journal, the leading critic, whose sentence could make or destroy; not mere conventional praise, but long, minute, and elaborate commendation. A “new power added to the stage;” “exquisite grace—womanly tenderness—refinement—a perfect heroine!” and so on, through a column nearly of excellent writing. Never had this critic spoken in this partial strain without telling effect. It will tell now, indeed. He took up the next paper: raptures again, of the conventional sort—tenderness—exquisite grace—new power added to the stage. He looked at a third paper: it was the same. The penny papers were almost delirious in their praises; and showered complimentary epithets, as a boxer would strike out, wildly. It was too plain. Her success was to be one of the sensations of the day—something to be talked of all over London, and become a nine days' wonder. He understood perfectly how this would furnish subject for small talk; how the fashionable people, at their dinners and balls, would talk and simper, and ask each other had they been to see the new actress? He knew the regular procedure; and how far these *fade*, empty creatures would welcome with delight something to fill up their vacuous thoughts, and would crowd to see.

It was to fall out precisely as he anticipated. Before two days had passed by, the graver and more solid organs that appear every week had taken the subject up, under the title of “The New Actress;” with a grave and elaborate criticism of all points and merits—“the exquisite beauty of her face.” But it was within a few days more,

when young Mr. Benbow had a few fashionable friends to dinner, that the fated discovery came about. All through the meal the Sword swung slowly over his head; and there was a pale, glib young man, whose style of agreeable conversation was incessant putting of questions, on whom he pitched with an almost certainty as the vehicle which was to bring mischief to him. This was a Mr. Raby.

"But," said this gentleman, during dessert, and very suddenly, "have you seen the wonder—the new actress—the most lovely creature in the world? Lord Dufton says she is the most striking woman in London."

Into Mr. Benbow's face, talking to his neighbour on some indifferent subject, came a nervous, anxious expression.

"Who is she? Where does she act?"

"Lydia Elphinstone; and she plays in 'The Lady of Lyons.'"

The father saw the colour all desert his son's face. He became ghastly pale, and started.

"Are you sure?" he cried. "Is that the name? Oh! it can't be."

"Oh, it is, I assure you!" said the young guest, quite business-like in his fashionable information. "And I must tell you it is quite the thing to go and see her. Lord Mantower and Lady Long, of Eaton, were at the box-office begging for stalls yesterday, and could not get them. She won't stay long at that theatre, I can tell you. Doestone or Dabster will be trying to get her."

The young man was greatly excited.

"It is so strange," he said.

But a look from his father settled on him—a sort of half-warning, half-imploping look.

"Well, then," said the guest, "why not go and see for ourselves? I tell you what—would you care to make up a party? If you *would*, I think I could manage the places."

"Yes," said the other, still confused. "What would you say, Rosa?"

She had her eyes on Mr. Benbow steadily and searchingly fixed.

"I should like it of all things!" she answered. "We must go."

Mr. Benbow afterwards thought of the ghastly smile that must have been on his face as he appeared to enter heartily into the proposal.

"To be sure! let us go. I should like it of all things. A fine-looking actress on

the boards has always an attraction for even old fellows. I am not ashamed to own it."

"Oh, yes, you will come too; we will make quite a large party."

"The only thing is," said Mr. Benbow, in the same forced enjoyment, "I must admire Lady Rosa's courage in trusting him near such dangers. There was a little history, which, I dare say, she suspects; and there was a certain lady on the stage who gave me not a little trouble—eh, Charles?"

The young man looked with a strangely confounded air. Surely this was the effrontery of desperation. Yet, it was so well and effectively done that it had the most perfect effect. Young Mr. Benbow was duly "rallied" by his friends; and Lady Rosa looked not a little put out. Later on, she said—

"We shall be delighted to go, of course, if Charles be strong enough."

"Ah," said his father, "very wise and prudent of you, Rosa. That is true. Caution in any case. I shall go myself."

"Nonsense," said the friend; "I know I can get a box. There is Pelly, who knows the manager, and all managers; we can depend on him. Let us say to-morrow night. That will suit you, Mr. Benbow?"

The other smiled, but not so successful a smile as some of his other smiles. That superhuman endurance was gradually weakening.

"Oh, you know Mr. Pelly, then? Oh, then, let us go; and you can all come back to supper here. We can depend on you for the box."

"Very well, then; that's all settled," said Mr. Benbow; "and we shall have a regular expedition."

As he got to his room that night he repeated the words—

"Yes, all that's settled. All for the best!"

He caught sight of his face in the glass over the chimney-piece, and almost started at its ghastly aspect.

"Yes, it will be for the best. I could not endure this strain any longer. Let this infernal Sword, which *was forged in Hades*, come down on my head and end all."

At this moment he heard a tap at the door, and his son entered.

CHAPTER XII.

THE son started as he saw him.

"My God, father! are you sick? But I wanted to see you, to ask you—good heavens, father! could there be any terrible

mistake about this actress? The Christian name and surname so like, and the same play."

All the muscles in the father's face were quivering; his lips were trembling, as he tried to force them to take the shape of a smile.

"I am ill," he said. "Charles, I think I have overdone it; though, indeed, I have been doing that all through my life."

"But this actress?"

"Nonsense. She has only taken another name. Has heard of the success of the other, and wished to trade on it."

"Oh! father, this won't do. I have some horrid instinct that this has something to do with her. Oh, if it should—if her death—My God! we may be on the brink of a precipice. I must go off to the theatre at once, and see if it be the same."

Mr. Benbow again shook from head to foot; but his ghastly smile came back to his face.

"My dear boy, don't be foolish. Think of Rosa, who is not likely to be pleased at such proceedings. I assure you, you ought to be cautious in this matter. Take my advice, leave it till to-morrow night. It will be time enough then. If you are not well enough to go—"

"Oh, I *must* go. If I were dying I must go. I cannot endure the suspense."

"To be sure," said his father; "and we shall make a very pleasant party. Good night."

The son thought that the father was gay that night; but the miserable man had a more miserable night before him.

"It is now at an end," he said to himself. "I am quite weary of all this. They are all determined to force the end on me. Let it come! I am ready."

The whole of that night he spent in writing or in arranging some papers that he had with him. It was, indeed, high time that it all ended. Who shall say that this poor baited soul had not had enough of trial and suffering, beyond his strength? It was, indeed, growing unendurable. He was sick at heart, and weary. The cold, sickly, gray light came stealing in, and found him shivering and still at work. Then he lay down, and, with staring eyes, lay there till it was time to come down. And this was the successful Mr. Benbow!

There was a whole day's wretched *acting* before him. Again his son came to him, in

a shrinking, timorous fashion. He, too, had had a wretched night.

"I have this terrible presentiment, father," he said, "over me. This day will drag through, till I see her to-night."

"It is all a delusion, my dear boy, I tell you again. I knew at the time—and investigated the matter—that she was dead. For Heaven's sake don't let such a bogie trouble you as this. Wait till to-night, *and by to-morrow you will find* the matter will be settled. I engage that. So promise me that you will not trouble yourself about it until to-night. Then you will be convinced."

The day wore slowly on. Mr. Benbow, it was noted later, was singularly busy, hurrying about: now with his solicitor; now writing diligently. His face, as he appeared on the stairs for a moment, passing and re-passing, struck both his son and daughter as something almost weird-like, and filled her with a sort of pity. So that she went up to him, took his hands kindly, and said:—

"You must be ill, dear father, and must take care of yourself. I am afraid you are sadly harassed with something. Why not confide in him—in us?"

He looked at her with an indescribable anguish.

"If ever," he said, "you were to come to think that I had done you any injury, at a time when I might not have the opportunity of justifying myself, I ask you now, beforehand, not to believe that I intended it. In my life I have done many things, and been obliged to do many things, which may have hurt others; but in your case, as I live, I am innocent! I had no intention, no matter what may be the appearance. No, as I live or die!"

"My dear sir, what are you saying? I never dreamed of such a thing. What can you mean. Put all such things far away from you."

"Ah, one of these days strange things will be said of me; as, indeed, there will be of every one. But you will be indulgent, I know."

This was about four o'clock in the day. Their dinner was to be early—at six; after which they were to go and see the play. It was served punctually at the hour, when there had arrived the Duke, Mr. Pelly, Q.C., and some other gentlemen. But Mr. Benbow had not come in. They waited a few

minutes; then went to dinner. His son was a little nervous and expectant as the night drew on. His father was so odd and curious of late—so unpunctual, too—that they were not much surprised. It was a very pleasant party.

CHAPTER XLII.

MR. BENBOW went out, down to the river side, close to Westminster Bridge, and remained a long time leaning with his elbows on the parapet, looking down in the water. "*That*," he thought, "would resolve much"—a simple, everyday solution. As he looked up into the bright sky—the great arch that was over London—he felt that the glittering Sword seemed to catch the light, and he turned his eyes downwards again into the running water.

Up and down crossed each of the little steamers, darting past, like little minnows in a brook; and, down the stairs slowly, he got on board one of these "penny boats," and was borne away down the river.

He got out at the Temple Pier. In one of the old cellar-like courts of that place he knew a poor and lonely barrister—a relation of his, whom he rarely, and in desperate emergency, had assisted. This poor legal bat, or owl—who in the world outside was such a bird, flapping about with comfort in the darkness about his roost—was called Gates; and to him the great Mr. Benbow now came to pay a visit.

This poor mole-eyed drudge lifted his eyes in wonder as his kinsman entered, and made almost as though he would grovel before him.

"I want advice on a law matter," said Mr. Benbow, coming to the point; "and, you know my way, I give fees myself without wasting money on an attorney. There."

And he put money down on the table.

"I shall come and consult you in the morning; meanwhile, will you let me have the loan of these rooms for a few hours? Suppose you go and dine in the City; dine well and heartily. There."

He put some more money down on the table.

"Do that, and I shall not ask to see the bill. Now, will you go?"

The lawyer did not wait, but hurried out, leaving his patron in those bare, blighted rooms—two chairs, a shattered old desk, and a ragged range of books.

Mr. Benbow was left alone. He heard the clock down at Westminster pealing out six o'clock. Another hour and a half and his son would be at the theatre; the lamps lighted. In two hours the figure of that woman would be revealed upon the stage; the footlights blazing on her face. His son's eyes would have rested on hers; and *then*—a cry; and that killing infamy and disgrace be all revealed!

What a disgrace! Unutterable villainy! Police—newspapers—all the world talking of it at breakfast next day! And that poor, good family—that poor girl so betrayed! He was hurrying—he, the respectable Mr. Benbow, friend of Cabinet Ministers, candidate for peerage, the successful man—to this vile exposure, now, at most, only an hour and a half off!

Well, there was an end coming; that, at least, was welcome. By morning it would be over. Still, there was something to be done yet. And, going to the rickety window, all grimed with dirt, he looked out anxiously.

Was she coming? It was now growing dark. Lights began to glimmer in the windows round the courts—all, also, so grimy and dark that they looked like a number of old horn lanterns; and round about him were weak eyes, wasting mould and tallow candles, yellow papers enough to make a great pile in the yard; but, among all the living spirits at work around him, there was not one, he knew, waiting for such a sentence as he was, or with such a terrible Sword—the thread half-worn through—suspended over his head.

Hush! here was a muffled figure of a woman in the centre of the court, looking up to the sky! How would she find his grim cell?

So he hurried down, went out to join her, and brought her upstairs. As she entered, she threw off her cloak, and he saw she was dressed for her part—as superb and dazzling a Pauline as ever walked the stage.

"I can only stay a quarter of an hour. You know what is before me to-night; but I did not like to refuse such an earnest request."

"Yes," he said, "just as the gaolers, governor, &c., of a prison are humanely indulgent to a prisoner on the day of his execution. It is idle, I suppose, to appeal to you any more?"

"Perfectly," she said. "The hour has

come at last, and the woman, too! Thank God, I have lived for this!"

"That impious profanity is of a piece with the rest. Take care He does not still interpose. Charles may not come, after all."

"No fear of that. He must be dull, indeed, if he have not a suspicion. At eight o'clock that suspicion will be resolved. Fancy that *tableau*! The noble family—the high-bred girl—the great Mr. Benbow, who had villainously planned this bigamy! Forgery, poisoning, embezzlement—these are everyday things, even with persons of your station. But this—this is real disgrace! Thank Heaven! I had the patience to wait—to wait patiently for all this. There were fearful odds against me. What was I likely to do with a great potentate like you? But, waiting, it all came."

"Demon of a woman, what does this mean? What have I done to you? Tell me now at the end; for, I own it, you have levelled me indeed—destroyed me! Give me this satisfaction."

"I want to give you nothing in that way; and if I were to tell you, it would not be, you may be sure, for your satisfaction. You deserve nothing from either Heaven or earth, from God or man. If you dare to speak of me as a demon, *you!*"—and here her eyes flashed fire—"But I am only a minister of justice, of retribution!"

"Of justice," he faltered.

"Yes, of justice! Are your worldly wits so dull that you consider that all I have planned, and all I have done to you, is meaningless—a whim, a mere purposeless humour of mine!"

He looked at her with a fresh terror, and, at the same time, with a new intelligence.

"Call me demon! Call me rather the Angel of Vengeance! Ask me for mercy! Is it possible that you can complacently suppose that all through your long, unscrupulous life—carrying out your own selfish ends imperiously—you have left no traces of injustice, of cruelty, of pitiless and merciless want of forgiveness? Think of that wretched man! Was there ever at any time one as proud as yourself, though poorer—doing only his duty—with many depending on him; but who had the misfortune to stand in your way, and who dared to say honestly he would not stand out of it? Was there one who, when you had crushed him, humbled himself in the dust

for the sake of his wife and children, actually imploring mercy, which was *refused*?"

"What, what! Gordon, the clergyman!" he gasped.

"The same!"

"And you—his—daughter?"

"Yes. He died. *You* killed him. There are no human courts and juries that can reach such offences, or such murderers. I have done so, and your time has come!"

"Oh! I understand it now," he said, slowly drawing his hands away from his face. "It is just; it is right. I have no protest to make. Not another word shall I say."

"One sign of mercy, of grace—if I could have found such—and I would have spared you—would spare you now. I have his very letter to you—the copy—here. I never parted from it an instant. I kept it and your answer together; and many a time, as I was moving on slowly to this last act of justice, I read both over, and was stimulated at once."

She read aloud. "Hers first:—

"For God's sake, Mr. Benbow, have pity on us, and let not his ruin be on your soul. After all, he opposed you honourably, and from principle. He thought it was a duty, as I know well: and so may I be reckoned with on the last day if I am not speaking the truth. It was not you, but of your principles that he thought. Oh, as you will be judged *hereafter*, forget—forgive! Think of him—think of me—of our poor, beautiful, tender girl! Do not hunt us down!"

"Now for his:—

"You are too noble and too generous, and have been too successful, to think of revenging yourself on one so humble as I am. We have been enemies, and I have done my best—I own it—in every way, to hinder your designs from succeeding. You will respect me the more for owning it. You will respect me still more when I tell you I would have died rather than submit to the humiliation of asking you for anything; but I am not stoical enough to see my poor wife and child suffer. For the sake of God, of our Lord and Christ, in a lower degree for the sake of pity and humanity—not for me; for I shall not long survive this part of the disgrace—spare us, or you will feel bitter remorse!"

She read the rest very slowly.

"More! Our ruin will rise up one day in another shape. Mark me! We know whose is revenge: it is not yours!"

Without a word, he merely bowed his head, made no protest, and said—

"It is just; it is true. Let it fall."

"It *shall* fall, and in half an hour."

"Just a moment," he said, hurriedly, "and I will go with you. So you are his child. It is only right that you should be the Nemesis. Bear with me a moment; wait here a second."

And he passed hurriedly into the next room.

She waited a few moments, then called out—

"Come back! come back!"

Then he came out. There was a great change in his face.

"Your spirit of revenge—or justice, rather," he said, "does not go beyond me. My humiliation or punishment ought to be enough. You should have mercy on my son and his innocent wife."

"Yes," she answered, fiercely, "it shall begin and end with you, never fear! But you must come with me—you must be on the spot. I must see your face when the discovery is made."

A curious look came in the face she spoke of. She noticed, too, that he was trembling and swaying to and fro.

"No," he almost gasped, "these are things that your animosity cannot reach to, powerful as it is. You won't degrade me so far. I am spared that, thank Heaven."

"How do you mean?" she cried, uneasily.

"No; you cannot triumph over the laws of immortality. It is ended here. You can do no more."

He fell back into a chair, and shrank up literally in a sort of convulsion.

"Take me to the theatre and see the disclosure!" he cried. "No, you cannot do that. I shall be far beyond your power, and that of all enemies, by that time. It is ending—ending fast for me. And I am glad, for I am weary."

"Good heavens! what have you done?" she cried, turning pale. "Not—?"

He feebly lifted a small bottle.

"What have I done? This is your work. For you all the credit. I disclaim to ask any favour; but at such a moment pride and revenge might be forgotten. Spare

him—spare her! They are innocent. *They* have done you no wrong. He loved you, and would have loved you. *He defied and offended me* for your sake. That is some claim at least to your forbearance at this time. I beg—I implore."

She gazed at that miserable figure—crouching, contracted—now slipping down to the very ground before her. Those eyes, which had so long pierced through the fogs of intrigue to the pinnacles of success, were fast glazing. Hers were wild and troubled.

"I did not expect this, nor, as I live, did I wish it. This is your own act: the retribution brought on you by the older crime. It cannot be laid to my account. You have atoned for your crime. God forgive you, as I do! Nay, I will say this, would to Heaven I had not lived to see this! But with this cruel issue, which I cannot avert, it ends. Die in peace, unhappy man; you have made atonement. No one living shall ever know our secret: even though I must lose all my hopes and prospects of life, they shall not see me to-night at the theatre."

Through the film over those dying eyes, he saw the tall figure fade away.

The barristers round pored over their briefs. The tallow candle flared and "guttered" all the night long, until midnight, when the last half-inch sunk down in the socket and gave up the ghost. When the old specimen of humanity came in the morning, he started back with a cry.

* * * *

At the Theatre Royal the average crowded and brilliant house was assembled. They waited ten minutes; then a quarter of an hour; then half an hour. Then the manager came out; and, in the conventional speech, apologized. Miss Elphinstone had dressed for the play; but a note just received informed them that she had thrown up her engagement, and would never appear again. For such outrageously capricious conduct there was no excuse. He threw himself on their indulgence, and was entirely in their hands.

There was great excitement in the "theatrical circles" when this extraordinary step became known. But Miss Elphinstone, or Effingham, was never heard of in England again. She had left a handsome sum in the manager's hands by way of indemnity, so no search was attempted for her.

For the newspapers there was abundant grist in the terrible catastrophe that occurred at the Temple. But every one knew that Mr. Benbow had latterly a great deal on his mind—had latterly been very odd and “queer.” Suicide often followed on that state of mind. It was only to be expected. Lady Rosa had her own suspicions as to the matter; and that it arose from some miserable passion for a low and wretched actress. It was a degrading thing for a man of his sense and years. However, death condones many things!

Mr. Charles and Lady Rosa Benbow live very happily together, wealthy and prospering; and over their heads—as yet, at least—has never swung the terrible SWORD OF DAMOCLES.

THE END.

NATURAL HISTORY OF WASPS.— PART III.

IN our foregoing sketch of nest life, we only noticed the mother and the workers. While the workers, which are by far the most numerous—and, to us, the only troublesome part of the community—begin to appear in the early summer, the drones or male wasps, and the perfect females, do not appear till the latter end of August or the beginning of September. Since the number of cells in a nest has been known to exceed sixteen thousand, and each cell serves for three generations, the total population, making every allowance for accidents, may be put as, at least, thirty thousand; and, of this vast number, there are not more than some hundreds of perfect females, and about the same number of males. According to Dr. Ormerod, the drones do nothing for the public service, except, instinctively, by perpetuating the species. Messrs. Kirby and Spence, however, give them a better character. “They do not, indeed” (these delightful writers observe), “assist in building the nest, and in caring for the young brood, but they are the scavengers of the community; for they sweep the passages and streets, and carry off all the filth. They also remove the bodies of the dead, which are sometimes heavy burdens for them, in which case two unite their strength to accomplish the work; or, if a partner be not at hand, the wasp thus employed cuts off the head of the defunct, and so effects its

purpose. As they make themselves so useful, they are not, like the male bees, devoted by the workers to a general massacre, when the great end of their creation is answered; but they share the general lot of the community, and are suffered to survive till the cold cuts off them and the workers together.”

In the last section of this extract, which is from the pen of the Rev. W. Kirby, we fear that the amiable but not very logical writer is inclined presumptuously to judge the mysterious ways of Providence.

Our knowledge regarding the young females is very imperfect. They differ essentially from the corresponding class in a beehive, in living amicably with their mothers and other relatives. They do not appear to take any part in building or house-keeping, and remain permanently inside the nest, till the final breaking-up of the establishment, after which they may be found hybernating in large parties beneath the bark of a tree, or in a hole in a bank. There is no definite period of the year at which the nest is deserted: a hot summer and a good harvest of fruit may hasten the dispersion of the swarm, by over-stimulating and prematurely exhausting the queen; or a severe storm may scatter and destroy the insects and their works at one fell blow. But in any case, whether the individual members of the community have straggled away because they felt that, with the death of their common mother, their work was done, or whether they are killed by the inclemency of the weather, the end is sure to come; and the beautiful fabric they have constructed is left as a refuge to hardier insects, such as earwigs and wood-lice, till its final disintegration by natural influences.

Wasps grow smaller as they grow older, and the tattered ends of their wings indicate the ravages of advancing age. The limits, however, of a wasp's life are brief. The workers and drones never survive the winter; and, under ordinary circumstances, the queen's life does not exceed a year and a quarter; although, if she is prevented from laying her eggs at the ordinary period, she may live an additional year.

Although cold, wet, and old age are the ordinary causes of death, wasps, like bees, are liable to certain diseases; and one form of disease from which, in common with bees, they suffer, is worms. There are at least two parasites of this class that inhabit the bodies of these insects, and their habits

and characters are so remarkable that they deserve a brief notice before we bring this article to a close. They both belong to the family of *Gordiidae*, or hair-worms; and one is termed *Gordius aquaticus*, and the other, *Sphaerularia bombi*. The *Gordii*, which closely resemble horse-hairs, live in the bodies of various insects; and, usually, are so long that, even when closely coiled up, they leave little space for the vital organs of their unwilling hosts. A *Gordius* upwards of eleven inches long has been found in the body of a ground-beetle scarcely an inch in length; and in larger insects these worms have been known to attain a length of three feet. When they reach maturity, they perforate the skin of their victim, and seek water or moist ground, in which they deposit their eggs in long chains. It is not clearly known how the evolution of the young worm from the egg proceeds, or how it obtains access and entrance into its destined host; but this remarkable fact has been established, that if, on escaping from the bodies of their victims, they happen to fail in finding a place sufficiently moist to meet their views, they become perfectly hard, brittle, and dormant, till a genial shower comes to refresh the earth, when they at once revive, and start off at an active pace in search of a suitable spot for depositing their eggs. These worms possess a mouth and œsophagus, or gullet, but no stomach or intestine; and hence they must absorb their nutriment through the skin. Although we do not know the precise mode in which the *Gordius* enters the body of its host, the process has been watched in an allied genus, *Mermis*, whose young, after passing a certain time in moist earth—in which they grow rapidly—seek to gratify their immigrative propensities by selecting and penetrating into the soft-bodied larvæ of various insects. This entrance is accomplished by means of a sharply pointed boring stylet, which, when not in use, is concealed within the head. Having once gained access to the host, they remain within its body until the larva has become transformed into the perfect insect, or until their own sexual maturity is completed, and they are ready to lay their eggs. As the female worms are already impregnated before their entrance into the caterpillars, it is unnecessary (physiologically speaking) that the male *Mermis* should lead a parasitic existence; and this may explain why no male *Mermis*

has as yet been detected in the body of an insect.

The other parasitic worm, the *Sphaerularia*, is in some respects more remarkable than the *Gordius*. The female is nearly an inch in length, and about one-fifteenth of an inch in diameter, which is tolerably uniform from head to tail. It is of whitish colour, and bluntly pointed at either end. As might be inferred from its name, its body is everywhere covered by numerous small button-like projections or knots, amounting to about 800 in number. It possesses no trace of an intestine, not even a mouth; but, in place of the intestinal canal, there is a large fatty mass containing numerous cells. The same fatty structure, less developed, occurs also in the *Gordius*, the œsophagus opening into its anterior extremity. The reproductive organs in the full-grown females contain eggs in all stages of development. The young animals are born soon after the eggs are laid, and are about one-sixtieth of an inch in length. Although this worm was described (by M. Leon Dufour) in 1836, it was not till 1861 that the male was detected and described by Mr. (now Sir John) Lubbock. It is so minute that it may have probably been seen and mistaken for a young worm by previous observers. According to Lubbock, it is more than 28,000 times smaller than the female—a remarkable fact that may interest Miss Becker and her disciples.

The *Gordius*, which is much the rarer of these worms, causes far more distress to its host than the *Sphaerularia*. In the only instance in which Dr. Ormerod met with it—in a female wasp that was just hatched—the abdomen was distended as if she were going to become the mother of a swarm, and the unfortunate insect was always straining to rid herself of her burden; while the presence of *Sphaerularia*, apparently, gives rise to no symptoms.

In addition to these two undoubted parasites, the wasp has other enemies amongst her nearer connexions. Mr. Westwood (*op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 247) mentions five insects which infest the nests and devour the larvæ; and he states that he has seen a spider sucking a wasp which it had killed. Amongst these insects he mentions a beetle, *Rhipiphorus paradoxicus*, which unquestionably undergoes its transformations in the nest of the common wasp; but in what capacity it is present there, and what are its

relations to its hosts, are still matters of doubt. Mr. Andrew Murray, a well-known naturalist, has recently published an essay on this subject which has given rise to much discussion. "Is it," says Mr. Murray, "as a robber and a murderer that it appears, or simply as a guest? And if as a guest, is it as a cuckoo-guest usurping the place of the genuine offspring of its hosts, or as an inoffensive changeling, innocently imposed on the unconscious parents, and merely filling up a place which (from the wasp point of view) might have been better supplied had it been left empty." The former and more truculent view is supported by an observation recorded by Mr. Stone, who found a larva of *Rhipiphorus* sticking to the larva of a wasp, which it devoured, except the skin and mandibles, in forty-eight hours.

Prior to this apparently conclusive observation, Latreille, and most entomologists, although speaking doubtfully, yet, on the whole, inclined to the opinion that the *Rhipiphori* were bred by the wasps under the mistaken belief that they were their own progeny. On the strength of his having, in three instances, found two pupæ in the same cell—a wasp pupa and a *Rhipiphorus* pupa—Mr. Murray adopts the latter view; regarding it as conclusive evidence against the idea of the one feeding on the other. "They must," he observes, "have been hatched in the same cell, bred lovingly as larvæ in the same cell, and undergone their metamorphoses in the same cell. . . . Their positions were remarkable. In one of them the pupa of the wasp was near the mouth of the cell, but with its tail to the mouth; and the pupa of the *Rhipiphorus* farther in, with its tail to the base of the cell—their heads thus meeting." A sketch of this Damon and Pythias, in the position in which they were found, may be seen in the Horticultural Society's collection of Economic Entomology at South Kensington, where also their bodies may be seen embalmed in Canada balsam. It is worthy of notice that, in this intricate and difficult inquiry, Mr. Murray has received the greatest aid from Miss Eleanor Ormerod, of Sedley Park, Chepstow, a sister of Dr. Ormerod, and "a lady with more of the true spirit and genius of a naturalist than any other whom it has been my" (Mr. Murray's) "fortune to encounter." Dressed up in much the same fashion that we described in an early part of

this article, she fearlessly handles, rifles, or removes the largest and most formidable nest. That her patience and perseverance are not inferior to her courage is sufficiently evidenced by the fact that, before sending to Mr. Murray the nest from which he made his observations, she had picked out of it no less than three thousand larvæ and pupæ. We cannot conclude without expressing the wish that Dr. Ormerod and his plucky sister may long remain unstung.

FODGERBY'S CRICKET MATCH.

"HOLD the reins, and I will show you her photograph," Theodore Devrient said to me, bracketing, at the same time, the whip, as we bowled along in his dogcart.

I took them, and Theodore got out his pocket-book, and extracted from it a *carte*, which he handed to me. He took the reins again, and I looked at the portrait. It represented a girl possessed of a sweet, rather than a striking, attractiveness; one of those faces that gather light and loveliness, rather than lose them, the more they are seen. A refined face, gray-eyed; with, perhaps, something of a dreamy expression; all the features good, though small. Just such a girl as would make a fair, true English wife, and cause the days of life to roll pleasantly on amid such English scenery of upland and lowland; such quiet villages far from the city; such houses, of a somewhat patrician stamp, scattered here and there behind their lawns and gates, as characterized the district through which we were driving.

"I like the look of her, Theodore," I said. "I suppose there is some obstacle, as usual. Tell us all about it."

"I shall bore you," my friend replied. "And, besides, we shall be after time if we dawdle; and dawdle we shall, somehow or other, if we begin to talk. And I don't want to irritate her governor by being late at his cricket match; he's sufficiently obdurate already."

Thus speaking, Theodore laid his lash lightly across his mare's shoulders, and we went on faster.

"I should have thought the governor would have been sympathetic, as one cricketer with another," I said.

"So he is," Theodore returned. "That's why the thing's so hopeless. If he had cut

up rough, I might have a chance. But he keeps telling me how much he feels for me, and that his dearest wish has been that I should get my salary raised, so as to enable me to marry his daughter."

"And is equally amiable to Miss Middleton, I suppose."

"Is equally amiable to Ina. Tells her that he should prefer me; but that, all circumstances considered, he feels it his duty to recommend to her instead, Fodgerby."

"H'm!" I said. "If he would only lock her up in a hayloft from which you might rescue her by means of a rope ladder. I suppose she's softened by his treatment, and thinks, after the manner of girls, that she must do as her father tells her."

"Yes," Theodore said, touching up the mare again. "Thinks she must marry Fodgerby, though she laughs at him."

"Who is he?"

"Fodgerby of Trinity. Did you never hear of the famous Fodgerby of Trinity? You've heard of his father, anyhow."

"Don't recollect the name."

"The father did a very discreditable thing," said Theodore. "He invented a new sort of treacle."

"Did he advertize it?" I breathlessly asked, with a proper sense of the lowness of the conduct of Fodgerby's father.

"He had the effrontery to do so," Theodore replied. "Havn't you seen it at the railway stations, 'Fodgerby's Golden Syrup?' In fact, I believe the governor was a wholesale grocer. But Fodgerby, Junior, was famous at Trinity."

"How so?"

"Did such remarkable things. As a freshman he created quite a *furor*. Got into rather an exclusive set, somehow or other. Money, I suppose. Gave a breakfast, and put his father's business card under everybody's plate. It ran thus:—

"'F. Fodgerby, wholesale grocer and retail vendor of Fodgerby's Golden Syrup, thanks his numerous friends and patrons for their support, and informs them that his business is carried on as usual at 3333, '34, and '35, Sugar-lane, City.

"'N.B.—The Syrup is patented.'"

"After which, I suppose, his son was eliminated from the exclusive set?" I said.

"After which his son was eliminated from the exclusive set," my friend answered. "He then took to the Union and Radi-

calism. He was always speaking, and never got beyond the second sentence."

"Why not?"

"Because he had a nervous trick of peculiar absurdity. As soon as he got excited, and began to warm to his work, Fodgerby always laid his left forefinger along the left side of his nose, which naturally brought down the house, and the president had frequently to interfere. He was ultimately rusticated. He could turn somersaults; and one night, after a wine, he would turn them along the street outside the college, and the proctor passed by. I was standing in the gateway at the time—it was a bright moonlight night—and I saw and heard everything. The proctor interrupted Fodgerby in about the fourteenth somersault."

"'Sir!' he said, 'what on earth are you about?'

"'You be hanged!' Fodgerby said.

"He was upside-down at the moment, with his legs in the air, and his voice rose from the pavement. But, as he righted, he saw his mistake. He rose, picked up his cap, put it on, and touched it.

"'Sir!' said the proctor, 'your name and college.'

"Fodgerby fumbled in his pocket a minute, and produced a card, which he handed to the proctor.

"'You will find them there, sir,' he said, panting.

"'Why can't you tell me yourself?' said the proctor, holding up the card to the light. 'And what on earth do you mean by exhibiting yourself, an undergraduate of the University of Oxford, as a mountebank?'

"'I was only trying to impress my friends, sir,' Fodgerby said, looking patronizingly at us, who were standing in the gateway enjoying the thing. 'I was merely trying to inculcate my theory upon that difficult classical point, the *petaurum*.'

"'Much you know about the *petaurum*, sir,' the proctor said, reading the card. 'Why, sir! what impudence is this?' and the proctor, for the first time, was clearly angry in reality.

"Fodgerby, by mistake, had handed to him the professional card of his father, instead of his own private one.

"'I—I beg your pardon, sir,' Fodgerby said.

"It flashed upon him that he had handed in his father's card.

"I beg your pardon."

"The words were apologetic enough; but, unluckily, Fodgerby did what he usually did when he was excited, he laid his left forefinger slowly and carefully along the left-hand side of his nose.

"Sir!" said the proctor, in a fury, 'I gather that your name is Fodgerby, and that you are of the college before which we are standing. Call on me to-morrow morning.'

"And without more words he moved on. And the hapless Fodgerby, calling on him the next morning, was rusticated. But here we are. You get out now, as everybody is before us on the ground. I'll put the mare up at the Bell and Bull, and be down by the time they've tossed for innings."

But at this moment the portly figure of a large, reddish, genial-looking man presented itself by the side of our trap. This was old, or rather middle-aged, Middleton.

"Hallo, you fellows! I thought you wern't coming. I say, Theodore, feel like a hundred 'not out' this morning, eh?"

And he poked up at Devrient with a cricket bat.

"Get a good score, and forget about Ina. Better tumble out of the cart at once, we want to begin. Stop a minute—I'll get one of my fellows to take it up to the Bell and Bull."

"That's just his way about the matter, and the worst way of all," Devrient said, descending, as Mr. Middleton walked off for the man. "What is one to do?"

"Who's that puffy-faced, stumpy man, practising over there?" I asked, in default of a useful suggestion.

"That's the man poor Ina feels it her duty to marry," Theodore said. "That's Fodgerby."

And hereat a servant of Mr. Middleton's came up, touched his hat, and offering to take charge of our vehicle, Theodore and I moved off at once towards the ground.

"The governor doesn't keep your attachment at all a secret," I said.

"No, confound him! He mentions it before every one, as if it was a sort of mild joke against me. Shouldn't be surprised if he alluded to it at the cricket dinner. Why, there's Ina on the ground already!"

And Theodore left me, and went straight up to a phaeton which was stationary on the outskirts of the field; and from which a young lady of very pleasing appearance—

so far as I could see in the distance—seemed to be watching the practice. Having noted her, I went on by myself to the tent. Mr. Middleton was there amidst a throng of cricketers, who were sitting, standing, and lying in all sorts of attitudes—some struggling into cricketing boots; others ransacking their long cricket bags; others looking in vain for some peg about the tent where they might hang the habiliments they had doffed; others ready for the contest, and talking and looking at the few (amongst them was the stumpy Fodgerby) who had not yet left off the prelusive practice. Loudest amongst the talkers was the burly and rubicund Mr. Middleton, attired in a purple Jersey, and swinging in his hand a pair of wicket-keeper's gloves. He welcomed my entrance with a shout—

"Where's Theodore? Ah! gone to see Ina, I suppose."

And, with a voice very little subdued, he added—

"Poor fellow! but he'll get over it."

"Hadn't we better begin, Mr. Middleton?" one of his side said. "There are thirty-three men to go in."

I may here remark that the match to be played was between Devrient's eleven, of whom I was one, and Mr. Middleton's twenty-two, including Fodgerby.

"Of course we had," replied the captain of the twenty-two. "We'll go out into the field at once. Would you mind," he said, addressing me—"would you mind fetching Theodore, and telling him to send his first men in?"

I set off at once in the direction of the phaeton, which I reached unnoticed either by Miss Middleton or Theodore, who, with his elbow on the splash-board, was talking to her eagerly, and she listening. I stopped about five yards off and coughed twice, to no purpose. I then advanced and took off my hat. While I was performing this operation, Miss Middleton, perceiving some one was near, looked up. And I at once acknowledged to myself her attractiveness. Her face was a sweet one, but it was as pale just now as it was sweet; and she seemed agitated. So did Theodore, as he turned round. I apologized for my arrival, and gave Mr. Middleton's message; whereupon Theodore, with rather a sad last look at Mr. Middleton's daughter, left the phaeton, and returned with me.

"It's all over," he said, hurriedly, as we

went along. "Fodgerby proposed yesterday evening."

"And was accepted?" I asked.

"And was accepted. Poor Ina, of course, is miserable. She says her father was so kind about it, confound him."

"Surely," I said, wrathfully, "she could have claimed some right of decision in the matter. It passes one's patience, this idiotic, Chinese obedience to parents. And how *can* a girl who's worth a thought like such a duffer as Fodgerby?"

"My dear fellow, bear in mind that women look at men from a different standpoint to ours. No woman really despises a man."

"It would be well for you," I said, "if Fodgerby were to irritate Mr. Middleton somehow as he irritated the proctor."

"I don't know what would irritate Mr. Middleton, particularly just now, when he's manœuvred this engagement. There's only one thing that's certain to put his back up."

"What's that?"

But we had arrived at the tent by the time I asked this question.

"You and I may as well go in first," Theodore said, gloomily.

"You were going to tell me the weak spot in old Middleton's armour," I said, as we walked together to the wickets.

"Tell him he ought to play in the All England Eleven," Theodore replied, "and you will be holding a red rag before a bull. You know they let an amateur play with them now and then—and pay for it too, I expect. Well, Middleton wanted to do it once, and they wouldn't have him. Said he wasn't quite up to their mark. He's like a volcano still when it's mentioned. But here we are, at the wickets."

"Will you take first over?" I asked.

"Yes," Theodore said, indifferently.

"Guard!" called out the umpire.

Theodore put down his bat.

"A little too off."

"That'll do," Devrient said, making the smallest possible mark with his bat, and throwing it up behind him: not his usual custom. His play was generally graceful and scientific, rather than slashing. But he could hit when he liked, and I saw he meant to hit to-day.

"Play!" the umpire called.

The first ball was wide. The second was straight, but Theodore drove it back with tremendous force; and, if a bowler is to be

expected to catch a cannon ball, he ought to have caught this. He didn't, however; and we ran a four. The next ball, a leg-shooter, my friend condescended to block; but the fourth, being to the leg, farther away, he lifted clear over the biggest marquee into the turnpike road. And thus he went on. I am not a slow scorer, but when my runs were twenty-five in number his were fifty; at which point Mr. Middleton took off his wicket-keeping gloves, and essayed to bowl slow underhand. His first ball Theodore hit down to the end of the ground, and it pitched in front of Miss Middleton's phaeton, and bounded over the pony. We ran five. I regret to say, however, that I missed the next ball, which I rushed out to hit, and so was stumped—to the great delight of Mr. Middleton. Our remaining wickets fell rapidly, with a total score of a hundred and fifty, of which Theodore made nearly a hundred, and materially improved, by means of the exercise he gave them, the appetite of the twenty-two for dinner, which ensued upon the innings.

At this repast I was sufficiently favoured by fortune to find myself sitting by Mr. Fodgerby. We got on excellently. I found him affable and genial; rather absurd, to be sure, but not the less amusing on that account. Both his affability and absurdity increased after the consumption of a bottle of sherry, of which we partook together. In short, he took quite a fancy to me; and went so far, in his sudden friendship, as to inform me of his engagement to Miss Middleton. I congratulated him; and felt myself a great hypocrite for so doing, when I caught sight of Theodore's face a good way up the other side of the table. It looked melancholy enough, and he was silent and *distrain* throughout the festive proceedings. I was relieved, on his account, when we rose from the table to renew the match. For, from what I had heard of Mr. Middleton, I feared he might make the engagement of his daughter to Mr. Fodgerby public by means of an oration.

However, Mr. Middleton was, as a cricketer, enthusiastic enough to put off thinking about his daughter at present. He was, clearly, wildly anxious about the result of the match; for a middle-aged family man, indeed, his anxiety seemed almost ludicrous. With the view of keeping himself from carelessness and rashness, he ate little, and

drank nothing but water. He even remonstrated with Fodgerby, observing the latter to be assiduous with the flowing bowl.

"My dear fellow," said Mr. Middleton, "after the match we will carouse together. But let me implore you not to fluster yourself just before going in. You'll slog at everything."

"Well," Fodgerby said, "didn't Devrient slog at everything and make a hundred? I shall make a hundred."

And he refilled his glass.

"Time we were beginning again," said Mr. Middleton.

And we all rose.

"Stop a bit," Fodgerby said. "How long's this dining-table? Say twenty feet. Now, Middleton, what will you bet I don't go round it in ten somersaults?"

"I'll bet you a duck's egg, if you—My dear fellow—"

Fodgerby was head over heels already.

"My dear fellow, you'll ruin us."

And Mr. Middleton pressed forward, and seized his destined son-in-law in the midst of a somersault.

I faintly hoped there would be a row, and a consequent rupture of the engagement. But, upon being picked up and readjusted on his feet, Fodgerby was not in the least irritated. I hope I may be excused for having suggested, as we went down to the field together, that the conduct of Mr. Middleton was rude.

"Perhaps it was," Fodgerby said, turning a somersault in the narrow pathway that led from the inn where we had dined to the cricket field.

"Fodgerby! Fodgerby! really, Fodgerby!" a voice said, behind him.

It was Mr. Middleton's.

Fodgerby paused, standing on his head, and spoke from that position.

"Please let me go in last," he said.

"Very well," Mr. Middleton said, stiffly, and passing on.

There was evidently a coolness; at which I—having, as I before stated, the interests of Theodore at heart—was not displeased.

However, the innings commenced. The twenty-two had been most carefully chosen by Mr. Middleton (this, by the way, was the return match; and, having lost the first, he thirsted for revenge); and, for a twenty-two, were, to use technical terms, a strong team with very little tail. By the time half their wickets had fallen, their score was

within thirty of ours. Mr. Middleton was loud and bland, in an excellent temper; and I was much disappointed to see him sitting next Fodgerby on a bench, and conversing in the most amiable of manners with that ornament of the twenty-two.

"It won't matter about the sherry," I overheard Mr. Middleton say; "we shall beat 'em without you going in."

I became cognizant of this remark by reason of its being made during a visit I paid to the scorer's table, by which the two were sitting.

"Only thirty to get, and ten wickets to get it with," I said to Devrient, as I returned.

Whereupon he put me on to bowl.

In bowling, I flatter myself I excel—on my day, at least—and this was my day. The reader will excuse me for informing him that in the course of the next half-hour I was sufficiently efficacious to reduce the twenty-two to their last two wickets, with three runs to make. At this crisis there arrived at the wickets the last man—the acrobatic Fodgerby.

"Now, see me slog!" he said to me, as he took "guard." "I've done Middleton again—had a stiff glass of Irish whisky before I came in."

"Now, then, sir," observed the umpire, "the bowler at the other end's waiting."

Fodgerby assumed a highly offensive attitude with his bat, lifting it high above his shoulders. The ball came. Fodgerby madly lashed out. By one of those extraordinary chances which baffle calculation, he hit the ball. It was bowled to the off; but, somehow or other, Fodgerby sent it in the direction of square-leg.

"Run!" shouted his side.

"Run!" roared Mr. Middleton above them all.

Fodgerby and his partner ran—one, two.

"Run it out! Easy three; and make a tie!" The voice of Mr. Middleton, uttering this outcry, rang over the field.

"Come along, sir!" the other batsman shouted to Fodgerby.

"I'm coming, sir!" Fodgerby replied; and, throwing his bat away, he ran about four yards, and then, pitching himself forward, turned, between the wickets, a remarkably fine somersault. And in this style, somersault after somersault, proceeded towards his goal—the opposite wicket, giving time, amidst loud laughter, shouting, and

confusion, for the ball to be thrown up; and so, just before Fodgerby's head pitched into his ground, his bails were neatly popped off by the wicket-keeper, and the match lost by one run.

I do not know what view Miss Middleton might have been disposed to take of this performance, had she been on the ground—her phaeton had left it before dinner; but it was amusing to observe the suppressed agonies of Mr. Middleton. Of course, on his retirement from the wickets and arrival at the tents, Fodgerby was the centre of a wondering throng, and some very free remarks were addressed to him by various members of the twenty-two. But Mr. Middleton was less violent than I had anticipated, and, I may add, hoped. I saw him glare at Fodgerby, when the latter was not looking, with the expression of a tiger in his more irritable moments; but all he said was:—

"Funny idea of yours, Fodgerby! You've lost us the match!"

Fodgerby was evidently ashamed of himself, and confused.

"I beg your pardon!" he said. "The impulse of the moment carried me away; and I thought I could do it. But I apologize with the deepest humility."

"Sir!" was Mr. Middleton's suddenly indignant reply, "I don't accept your apology!" and he turned away from him.

"What have I done?" Fodgerby asked, with an astonished expression.

It is certainly bewildering to a man who makes a full apology, after a mild remonstrance, to find that his apology is regarded as an insult; but the fact was, that Fodgerby had done what he used to do in his nervous moments at the Union—had carefully and deliberately laid his finger alongside of his nasal organ. This gesture is generally thought ironical, and Mr. Middleton evidently took it so, and straightway left the field in a huff, only stopping, as he passed him, to speak to Theodore. The latter came up to me very shortly afterwards with a more cheerful aspect than he had worn during the day. He apologized for asking me to drive back alone.

"You see the governor's asked me up for the night, instead of Fodgerby."

"As delighted to hear it," I said, "as Miss Middleton, no doubt, will be."

"It's only prolonging the agony!" Theodore said, with something of his former

depressed tones. "You don't know Middleton. His moods never last. He'll be after Fodgerby again to-morrow morning, when he's cooled down."

"Well," I said, "we'll hope for the best. Good night!"

And, leaving him, I went up to the Bell and Bull, to prepare for my solitary drive. Entering the parlour, I at first, in the dusk of the evening, perceived no one, and was dropping—tired somewhat with the fatigues of bowling—into the easiest chair, when suddenly I felt an electric sensation of alarm, and almost cried out. What was that looming before me, on the other side of the little round table? An extraordinary object, or rather two objects, struck out in dark relief against the dim light that came through the parlour window. Two things sticking up, motionless, above the table cloth! Looking again, I saw that this singular spectacle was a pair of legs. My alarm ceased, for an idea struck me.

"Mr. Fodgerby?" I said, in inquiring tones, without going round the table. "Mr. Fodgerby, I think!"

"No one else," the voice of Fodgerby replied, dolefully, from the floor. "I was musing."

"Suppose we take a stirrup-cup together," I said.

At these words the legs began to move round the table in my direction.

"By all means," said the voice from the floor. "'I'll drown it in the bowl,' as the song says. My dear sir, I am in a state of great mental anxiety. I have offended Mr. Middleton. Love's young dream," pursued Fodgerby, who now came into sight, walking on his hand—"Love's young dream, and the young May morn, and a dear gazelle, and all that sort of thing, you know, is over and done."

I could not make a suitable reply; for Fodgerby's extraordinary attitude, in connection with these remarks, drove me into a fit of hearty laughter that I could not repress.

"You smile," Fodgerby said, plaintively. "But can you suggest anything?"

"Yes," I said, "several things. First, that you should get up and arrange yourself in a *sane pose* before the waiter answers the bell."

So saying, I pulled the bell-rope.

Fodgerby turned a somersault in a slow and melancholy manner, and then stood up

in the ordinary fashion. The waiter came in, and we gave our orders.

"And what would you suggest, in the second place, as a means of reconciliation, my dear fellow?" said the amiable Fodgerby.

"That you should apologize to Mr. Middleton."

"But it's just the very thing that offends him: it's not the offence but the apology that puts his back up."

"When a man," I said, "in begging pardon, lays his finger along the side of his nose—"

"Dear me," broke in Fodgerby, "I see it now—my old nervous trick. I'll write an explanatory note, and send it up from the inn at once. Can you suggest anything as to the way in which I should word it?"

"Directly," I said.

At this point the waiter had returned with the refreshment we had ordered. While I was mixing my beverage an idea struck me. I had no compunction in carrying it out; for I believed that Miss Middleton would not be bestowed upon Fodgerby to their mutual happiness, and I thought I was doing all three immediately concerned a service by the line of conduct I adopted.

"Mr. Middleton," I said, stirring my brandy and water with a spoon, "is an enthusiastic cricketer. If you want to please him, compliment him on his cricket. Put a postscript to your note, saying that, after what you have seen of his play to-day, you wonder he doesn't perform now and then as a gentleman player in the All England Eleven. Say you are sure they'd be glad to have him."

"Thank you," said Fodgerby. "An excellent suggestion."

And he rang the bell, and asked for writing materials at once. I sat half an hour longer, at the risk of a long drive in the dark. At last Fodgerby laid the blotting pad decisively on an effort that had evidently cost him much toil, and said:—

"Here we are. I'll read it, shall I?"

"Go ahead," I replied.

And Fodgerby read his composition as follows:—

"MY DEAR MR. MIDDLETON—I beg to apologize for the gesture—involuntary, I assure you—by which I justly offended you this evening. It was merely an old nervous trick of mine. I also beg your pardon for conduct which even the excitement of a

sudden impulse could hardly excuse, particularly as it lost you the match. I hope Miss Middleton will use her influence in my behalf.—I am, my dear sir, truly and apologetically yours,

"FREDERICK FODGERBY.

"P.S.—After witnessing your play to-day, I would suggest that you should now and then take the field with the All England Eleven. They are always glad of good gentlemen players."

"There," said Fodgerby, triumphantly, "I think that neat and not gaudy, eh? I rather think that'll do my business."

"I shouldn't be surprised if it did," I returned.

And having seen that Fodgerby directed and despatched this epistle, by a superfluous boy connected with the establishment, I gave him good night, and drove home in solitude, but in a hopeful frame of mind.

I may state, in conclusion, that I think I deserved the honourable position of best man at the lately celebrated marriage of Theodore Devrient, Esq., and Ina, only daughter of C. Middleton, Esq., of Middleton Hall, Swallowshire.

TABLE TALK.

IN JULY, 1815, the following curious paragraph appeared in the most popular magazine published at that time. July, 1870, finds the nephew of the First Napoleon at war; and some of the allusions contained in the note of 1815 are so *apropos* at the present moment, that we think it may be worth while to reprint it, and accordingly do so *verbatim*:—"WANTS A SITUATION, an Emperor, who has served in the highest and lowest capacities. Refers for his military character to the Emperors of Austria and Russia. Engages to show the way to any capital in Europe, London excepted. Undertakes to lead any army to conquest, provided he does not meet the Duke of Wellington. Begs leave to observe to gentlemen of the army that he permits pillage, and allows free quarters. Knows how to dispose of prisoners and to provide for the sick and wounded. Wishes to have it understood that his civil qualifications are equal to his military. Has studied imperial action and elocution under Talma. Receives ambassadors with propriety. Speaks all languages (including the language of the Hallés) with

fluency. Is a good writer. Several of his papers have been inserted in the *Moniteur*. Understands perfectly all the ceremonials of a court, from a coronation to an abdication: particularly expert in the latter. Sets up *fêtes* to the taste of any nation. Can perform funerals if required. Deems it superfluous to mention that any nation wishing to employ him may be secure of the utmost liberality in the articles of morality and religion. Polygamy and divorce permitted. Objects to suicide. Tolerates any form of worship. Dispenses with an established religion: engages to change his own at the shortest notice. Thinks it fit to mention that he has already been a Jew, a Mussulman, an Infidel, a good Catholic. Has no followers. Pecuniary considerations no object. To be heard of at the Lion d'Or, Havre de Grace. Letters addressed to N. B., post paid, or under cover to Carnot, à Paris, will be duly attended to. N.B.—Has no objection to going to Ireland.—July 1, 1815."

"YOUR MAJESTY DRAWS THE SWORD. France is behind you, quivering with indignation and haughtiness." Had this been said by Mr. Vincent Crummies, of the Portsmouth Theatre Royal, as he reviewed four ragged "supers," we should have laughed; as it is said by the French Senate to the Emperor Napoleon III., on the eve of a most unjust and causeless war, in which tens of thousands may be slain, we feel more inclined to weep. And yet how full of comedy is the scene! Let Mr. Tenniel, of *Punch*, draw France—who hates the Emperor—"quivering" with rage and "haughtiness," because somebody else offered some one, with whom she had nothing to do, a crown which she herself could not possibly wear! "War," said M. de Voltaire, "is the slaughter of twenty thousand men who wear turbans by twenty thousand others who wear hats." So it was in his day: in ours it is very little altered. A nation of thirty and six millions, with black beards and dark faces, sets deliberately to work to slaughter another nation with fair faces and white beards. Positively, there is no other reason.

"THE KINGS RAGE and the people weep." Such is the classical line which described war of old. But King Wilhelm, of Prussia, greeted by loud shouts at Berlin, bends down his aged head and weeps before his people,

and *they* madly rage before *him*; while in Paris the madness of the hour is such that no one can describe it, not even Carlyle, though he goes near it. "Ever," says he, "doth madness remain a mysterious, terrific, altogether *infernal* boiling up of the Nether Chaotic Deep." We have just changed the predicates. People rage and kings weep at this war; which is, nevertheless, a simple plot of that dark green complexioned, melancholy sporting man, the Emperor Napoleon—as time will prove.

"DOING THESE THINGS better in France," we are not surprised to hear that *all* newspaper correspondents are "warned off" the French camp and armies. France still believes in secrecy. So do we, when it can be kept. Also in the quality of correspondents, they do these things better in France. M. Edmond About, author of "*La Question Romaine* ; Tolla," and that work on Greece which, twenty years ago, anticipated all that could have been done in the Grecian massacres by Marathon brigands, is selected as the correspondent of *Le Soir*. M. About at first lifted up his voice strongly against war, and now he has nobly protested against conquest and annexation, and appeals to France not to forfeit the good opinion of England.

LET IT BE REMEMBERED, in favour of men of letters, that Guizot, Thiers, About, and even the friend of Victor Noir, M. Rochefort, have vigorously protested against war; and that MM. Arago, Desseaux, Esquiros, Jules Favre, Garnier Pages, and Pelletan, absolutely refused, in the House of Representatives, the war money demanded by M. Ollivier. These men are all men of letters, and of a high class. Against them are to be put the speculators for war—who, having bought papers, command hack editors to write up war—and Paul de Cassagnac, a creature of the emperor and empress, and editor of the *Pays*, who, in a journal without fifty subscribers, first raised the terrible cry of "*A bas la Prusse*," and suggested the annexation of Belgium.

"'THE FOOD JOURNAL!' Gwacious, Fwederwick, my bhoy! what class o' people can wead a food journal? What is it about—buttered rolls?" Thus Ensign Buzz to Captain Fuzz of the Royals. But householders ought to know what a capital idea

a food journal is, and how invaluable—if it really becomes a censor upon our commissariat, and nails in print the ear of the adulterator, poisoner, and food-cheater to the door-post of public opinion—it will be. A madman lately died, and one of his follies (?) was that he would live “upon eggs, because *they could not* be adulterated.” Innocent creature. A Yankee proposes to extract all the albumen for photography and fill up the egg with water, seal with white composition, and sell as quickly as possible. This is teaching his grandmother to suck eggs! Alas! what an eggs-ample those Yankees do set us!

ERRORS OF THE PRESS are sometimes witty in their curious saire. The *Athenæum* the other day announced a novel by Mr. “Justice” McCarthy, the author’s name being *Justin*. A publisher recently remonstrated with an author for the sentence, “Paul hath planted and Apollo hath watered.” Need we say that it was *Apollo*? But the book-men objected to the conjunction of “a heathen god and a Christian apostle.” A sweet poetess—as we know from Moore—was disgusted at her gushing verse being transformed from “freshly blown roses” to “*freshly blown noses*,” and a little volume lately noticed by us had a laudatory review spoilt by a misprint in the title: “*Essays in Mosaic*” became “*Essays in Prosaic*.”

“Ez for wa; I call it Murder!
There you hev it plain and flat;
And you’ve got to go no furder
Than your Testymint for that.”

So writes Mr. Hosea Biglow. Well, it *does* look like murder! The *Mitridateuse* is a mere plagiarism from the infernal machine of Fieschi, the original of which can be seen at Madame Tussaud’s. But then Fieschi tried to kill only one man, and wanted to make sure of him; and Fieschi was guillotined!

IN 1851, our Exhibition was, as the penny-a-liner says, inaugurated, and we were assured that universal peace would be the result. But the guns, and swords, and military trophies looked so pretty, that, from the Crimea to Bull Run, Solferino, and Sadowa, all nations have been playing with these toys. In the last great French Exhibition the Frenchmen did nothing but swarm like bees into the English Govern-

ment arms exhibition—and wonderfully fine it was—or look with hatred and admiration at Krupp’s gun. Let us suggest that, at the next Exhibition, by the side of the guns should lie some models in wax of what these guns do: eyes torn out, heads blown off, limbs shattered, hearts and lungs beaten into pulp, would form the chief dishes; while the consequences in ghastly gangrened wounds, in youth reduced at one blow to the helplessness of old age, lameness, blindness, contortions, hideous disfigurements, and a twisted distortion of all that was shapely and beautiful, might garnish the tables of this feast of war!

AND ALL FOR WHAT? Well, we do not pretend to be prophets, but, in our opinion, the Pope and his dogma, Isabella the Catholic and her golden rose, the devout Eugenie, the old Queen of Spain, as well as the chief plotter of the Tuileries, are engaged in the matter. The triumph of France will add immensely to the power of the friends of the Pope. Spain would at once lie under the dictation of France.

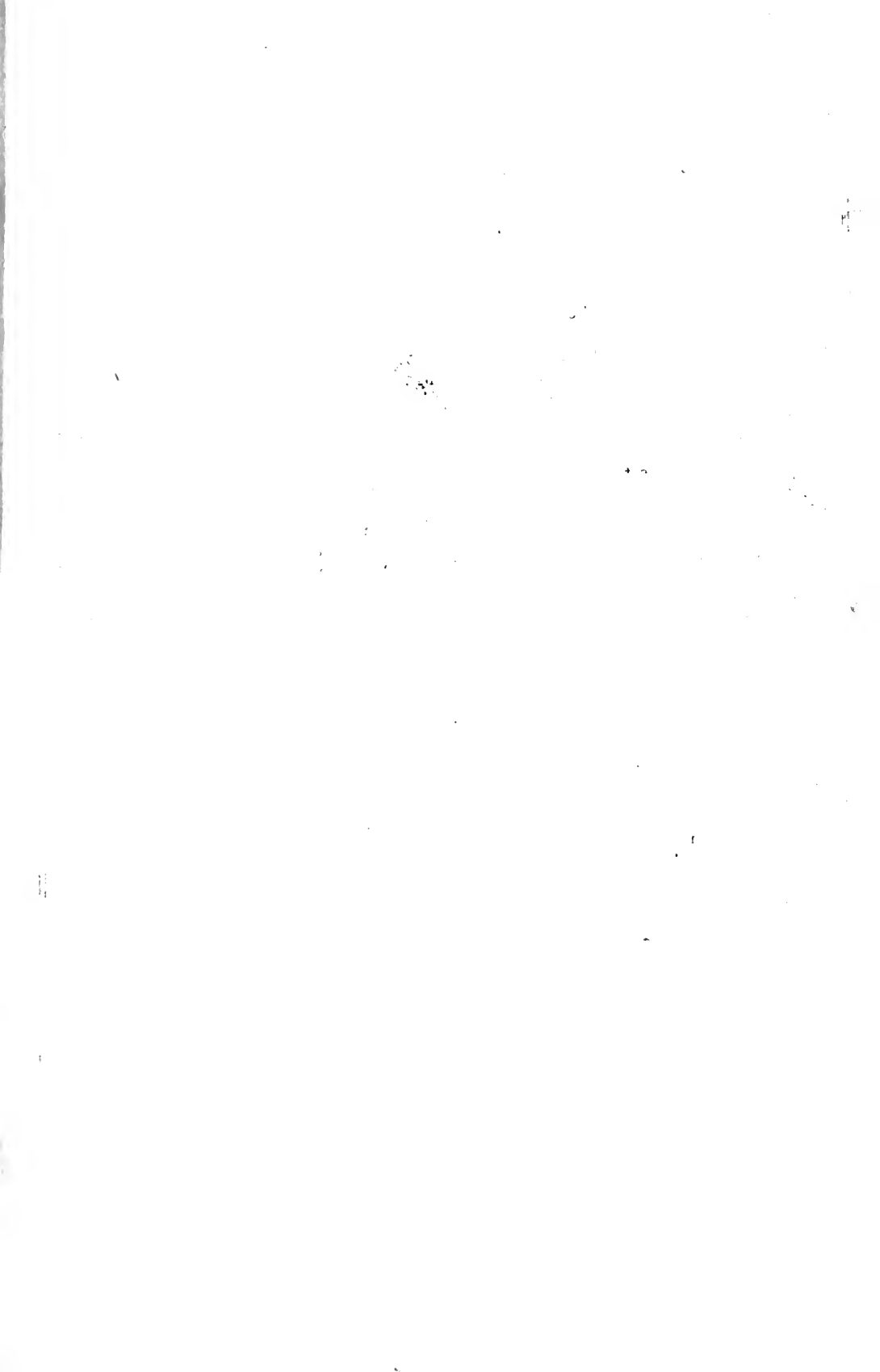
THE SMALL-POX, which is now prevalent in Paris, has caused the vaccination question to be debated very hotly among the French medical men. Of the efficacy of vaccination—or, more properly, inoculation—as a preventive of this terrible scourge, the best opinions among the French physicians coincide with those so often and so ably expressed by our own medical men—viz., that inoculation by lymph taken from healthy human subjects is harmless to most infants, and a sure preventive against this infectious disease. Therefore, we suppose, in the face of home and foreign medical testimony, private dislikes must be set at nought, and the Compulsory Vaccination Act remain in force among us.

ONE OF TWO.—The first Chapters of this Novel, by HAIN FRISWELL, will appear in our next Number.

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